

CLEMENS, ELYSIA VERSEN, Ph.D. A Leader-Member Exchange Approach to Understanding School Counselors' Roles, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intentions. (2008)

Directed by Dr. Craig S. Cashwell and Dr. Amy Milsom. 213 pp.

The services and interventions that school counselors provide, how they spend their time, and the focus and scope of the programs that they implement contribute to how school counselors' roles are defined. School counselors have struggled to define their roles in accordance with their beliefs about school counseling (Hutchinson, Barrick, & Groves, 1986; Mustaine, Pappalardo, & Wyrick, 1996; Partin, 1993; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press), in alignment with best practice recommendations (ASCA, 2005; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Carter, 1993; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press), and in competition with stakeholders' beliefs (Jackson et al., 2002; Paisley & Borders, 1995). Although the profession has made considerable strides in defining what school counselors' role should be (ASCA, 2005), individual school counselors continue to struggle with defining their role in their districts and buildings (Rayle, 2006; Scarborough & Culbreth in press).

Role definition has implications for school counselors as well as the stakeholders they serve. When school counselors face challenges to their role, some may become dissatisfied, choose to leave the profession, or acquiesce to providing services that are inconsistent with their beliefs about best practice (Baker, 2000). As a result, the needs of students and school communities may not be met (Scarborough & Culbreth, in press).

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory is a framework for considering how school counselors' roles are defined at building level and exploring factors that may impact school counselors' job satisfaction and turnover intentions. LMX theory is grounded in the belief that the quality of the relationship and interactions between a superior (principal) and

subordinate (school counselor) influence how subordinates' roles are defined (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). Further, there is evidence that superior-subordinate relationships (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and role definition (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Baker, 2000) may affect school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

The primary purpose of this study was to assess the relevance of LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) as the foundation for explaining variance in important school counselor outcomes: role definition, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. A model, grounded in LMX theory, was developed. Path analysis was used to test the fit of the hypothesized model. Fit statistics from multiple families indicated that the model fit the data well. The model explained 15% of the variance in how school counselors' roles are defined at the building level, 49% of the variance in school counselors' job satisfaction, and 20% of the variance in school counselors' turnover intentions.

A LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL  
COUNSELORS' ROLES, JOB SATISFACTION, AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Twenty-first century professional school counselors are leaders, collaborators, advocates, and agents of change (American School Counselor Association; ASCA, 2005). The ASCA National Model emphasizes that school counselors should not work in isolation but instead engage in cooperative efforts with stakeholders to implement programs that meet all students' needs and support the mission of their school. There is a growing body of literature in which researchers describe and evaluate school counselors' relationships with stakeholders including teachers (Ray, 2007), parents or guardians (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy; 2007; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007), and community members (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy; Kolodinsky et al., 2006). Despite descriptions of school counselors' relationships with administrative stakeholders, such as principals, as essential (Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Zalaquett, 2005), the impact of these relationships has not been evaluated empirically.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory has been utilized as a foundation for evaluating the outcomes of superior-subordinate relationships in a variety of professional and paraprofessional fields (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). According to LMX theory, there are differences in the quality of relationships between superiors and subordinates (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Linden & Graen, 1980) and the quality of the relationship is predictive of organizational and subordinate outcomes (Gerstner & Day; Graen & Uhl-Bien). Although LMX theory

has been applied only on a limited basis to educational settings (Heck, Bedeian, & Day, 2005; Myers, 2006), the language that LMX theorists have used to describe superior-subordinate relationship quality is consistent with school counseling literature on principal-school counselor relationships as outlined below.

Prominent LMX theorists Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) defined the construct of relationship quality as the degree to which trust, respect, and mutual obligation exist within a dyad. Similar language has been used by authors describing principal-school counselor relationships. For example, Ponec and Brott (2000) identified mutual trust as a characteristic of principal-school counselor relationships in schools with *exemplary elementary counseling programs*, and Zalaquett (2005) and Kaplan (1995) emphasized the importance of respect between principals and school counselors. The similarity in language between LMX theorists and principal and school counselor authors suggest that this organizational psychology theory may be applicable to principal-school counselor relationships.

Outcomes of superior-subordinate relationship quality that may be particularly salient for exploration in the school counseling profession include role definition, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Role definition has received considerable attention in school counseling literature, and the focus has shifted from describing the problem to finding solutions (Scarborough & Culbreth, in press). Job satisfaction (DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Rayle, 2006) and turnover intentions (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; DeMato & Curcio; Rayle) are constructs that are emerging in the school counseling literature.

## Role Definition

Role definition can be conceptualized as the identity of counselors within a school, how they spend their time, and the programs they implement. For example, some school counselors may be perceived as “quasi-administrators,” assist in discipline, and implement programs that are primarily responsive in nature, whereas other school counselors may be integral members of the leadership team, spend the majority of their time meeting students’ academic, personal/social, or career needs, and implement programs that are developmental and preventative. Role definition is an important area of inquiry within the school counseling profession because school counselors report a discrepancy between their current roles and ideal roles (Mustaine, Pappalardo, & Wyrick, 1996; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press), as well as between their current roles and best practice models (Brott & Myers, 1999; Burnham & Jackson, 2000).

Principals have considerable influence on shaping the role of school counselors with whom they work (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dollarhide et al., 2007; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994). At the same time, school counselors can influence these roles as well (Amatea & Clark). Leader-member exchange theory posits that, regardless of the initial conceptualizations a principal (leader) may hold for a school counselor’s (member’s) role, the quality of the relationship is associated with the latitude a school counselor has to influence and negotiate her or his role within a school (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). The process of influencing role development occurs through exchanges between a principal and a school counselor (Graen & Uhl-Bien).

An exchange that is associated with LMX theory is superiors' (principals') propensity to share important information and decisions with subordinates (school counselors) (Paglis & Green, 2002). Principals might engage in behaviors that include informing, consulting, and delegating regarding decisions that are relevant to and impact school counselors and their programs. LMX researchers have demonstrated that these types of exchanges are more likely to occur in higher quality relationships than in lower quality relationships (Linden, Sparrow, & Wayne, 1997; Paglis & Green, 2002). Principals' decision sharing may affect role definition because school counselors are provided with information about important decisions (informing) and invited to participate in the decision-making process (consulting and delegating). Furthermore, principals' decision sharing may serve as an entry point for school counselors wishing to advocate for themselves.

School counseling researchers have emphasized the importance of advocating for one's role within the school as a means of facilitating the role definition process (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press; Trusty & Brown, 2005). Advocacy involves school counselors developing an understanding of principals' perspectives and communicating problems and potential solutions to their principals (Trusty & Brown). For advocacy efforts to be effective, the relationship between a school counselor and her or his principal must be strong (Trusty & Brown).

The relationship between principal-school counselor relationship quality and role definition may not be linear. LMX theorists describe role making as a process through which a superior and a subordinate engage in exchanges that facilitate movement toward



a *partnership* (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). The exchanges between a principal and school counselor, therefore, may affect the outcome of how a school counselor's role is defined. Considering LMX literature in tandem with school counseling literature allows for the identification of exchanges, such as principal decision sharing and school counselor advocacy, which may mediate the relationship between principal-school counselor relationship quality and role definition.

For the purposes of this study, role definition was conceptualized through the outcomes of discrepancies in program implementation. One discrepancy considered was the difference between how school counselors spend their time on a day-to-day basis and how they would prefer to spend their time. Another discrepancy used in this study was the gap between aspects of a comprehensive school counseling program that school counselors think are important and those aspects that school counselors actually implement. These discrepancies provided insight into the degree to which a school counselor's role reflects her or his beliefs about best practices in school counseling.

#### Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

The principal-school counselor relationship and role definition also may have implications for school counselors' job satisfaction and intentions to continue their employment within the school. Researchers who have applied LMX theory to other professions consistently have found significant relationships between superior-subordinate relationship quality and subordinate job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Considering these constructs is important because school counselors who are satisfied with their jobs are more able to provide high quality services

to their school community (DeMato & Curico, 2004). Furthermore, turnover intentions may be particularly problematic. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006) reports a shortage of school counselors. The counseling profession as a whole is likely to experience more retirements and new job openings than graduates of master's level programs between 2004 and 2014 (The Bureau of Labor Statistics). Thus, a shortage of school counselors already exists and is expected to continue into the future, and this shortage may be exacerbated by those school counselors who exit their positions prematurely because of job dissatisfaction. As such, school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions may become increasingly important to principals.

There is limited literature on school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions. There is some support, however, for extending the LMX line of inquiry to the school counseling profession as well as considering the potential mediating function of role definition. For example, DeMato and Curico (2004) hypothesized that support from administrators may affect job satisfaction, and Rayle (2006) found that a moderate correlation between the relational construct of *mattering* and school counselors' job satisfaction. Additionally, Baggerly and Osborn (2006) found a small positive relationship between school counselors engaging in appropriate duties and both job satisfaction and their intent to continue their employment. Baker (2000) indicated that challenges to school counselors' roles might result in some school counselors feeling dissatisfied and leaving the profession early. From these studies, it seems apparent that further research on the counselor-principal relationship, school counselor role definition, and school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions is warranted.

## Statement of the Problem

Although the ideological roles and functions of school counselors have been clarified (e.g., ASCA National Model, 2005; The Education Trust, 2007), role definition continues to be a challenge for the individual school counselor (Rayle, 2006; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press). A predominant recommendation for school counselors seeking to redefine their roles is to advocate for themselves (ASCA, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press; Trusty & Brown, 2005). School-level advocacy is hypothesized to be contingent on effective communication and grounded in the relationship between principals and school counselors (Trusty & Brown). A review of counseling and education literature, however, revealed no studies that have (a) evaluated the outcomes of school-level advocacy or (b) assessed the impact of the principal-school counselor relationship and principal-school counselor communication exchanges on role definition.

Few researchers have investigated factors that may influence school counselor job satisfaction or turnover intentions. There is evidence, however, that superior-subordinate relationships (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and role definition (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Baker, 2000) may affect school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Nevertheless, a gap in the literature exists regarding relationships among the constructs of principal-school counselor relationship, role definition, school counselor job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

Further, school counselors' perception of the importance of implementing a comprehensive school counseling program remains unknown. Furthering the

understanding of factors that influence school counselors' beliefs about their roles has been identified as an important research question (Dimmit, Carey, McGannon, & Henningson, 2005). The only study in which school counselors' perceptions of comprehensive school counseling programs have been assessed (Sink & Yillik-Downer, 2001), however, was conducted prior to the publication of the ASCA National Model. The school counseling profession and best practice models have evolved significantly over the time frame in which practicing school counselors were trained (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006), and it is possible that school counselors' perceptions of what is important may reflect what was best practice at the time of their graduate training. Developing an understanding of what school counselors perceive to be important aspects of their job is important in understanding their work as self-advocates.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was tri-fold. The first purpose was to assess the relevance of LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) as the foundation for explaining variance in important school counselor outcomes: role definition, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The second purpose was to determine the degree to which school counselors think that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program that is aligned with the ASCA National Model is important and to identify factors that may influence their perceptions. Separating these first two lines of inquiries allowed for developing an understanding of how the principal-school counselor relationship and the exchanges of principal decision sharing and school counselor advocacy impact school counselors' ability to define their roles without assuming that the role a given school

counselor was advocating is what the profession has defined as best practice. Finally, this study evaluated outcomes of school counselors' use of self-advocacy skills.

### Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it utilized a theoretical foundation (LMX theory) to explore why the discrepancy between school counselors' actual roles and their ideal roles continues to occur and to evaluate best practice recommendations for school counselor advocacy efforts. Additionally, testing the hypothesized model added to the limited literature base on school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Given principals' responsibility for staffing their schools, considering the effect of the relationship on school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions may be important not only to school counselors but to principals as well. Such findings have the potential not only to impact school counselors and principals, but also to inform educators who train these professionals.

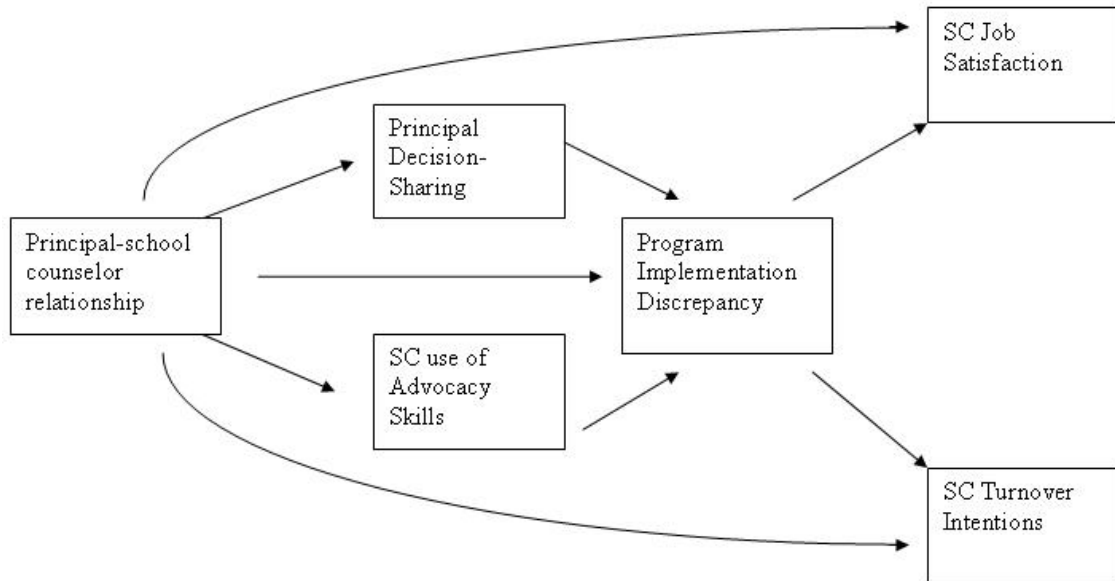
Explaining variance in the discrepancy between school counselors' current and ideal roles addresses one of the barriers to consistent implementation of the ASCA National Model. Another barrier may be that not all school counselors are advocating for what the profession has defined as best practice. Understanding school counselors' current perceptions of the importance of implementing a comprehensive school counseling program and factors that influence these perceptions may guide future research aimed at facilitating consistent implementation of the ASCA National Model.

### Hypothesized Path Model

Figure 1 depicts the model that was tested empirically. The researcher created the model based on a review of LMX, counseling, and educational literature. The hypothesized path model serves as an illustration of the following hypothesized relationships. School counselors' perception of the relationship with their principal grounds this model and was hypothesized to influence the exchanges that occur between principals and school counselors, program implementation discrepancy, school counselors' job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The exchanges that occur between principals and school counselors were hypothesized to explain more of the variance in program implementation discrepancy than the principal-school counselor relationship alone. Similarly, program implementation discrepancy was hypothesized to mediate the relationship between the exogenous variable of principal-school counselor relationship and the endogenous variables of school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Figure 1.

*Path Diagram of Hypothesized Model.*



### Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to fulfill the three purposes of this proposed study. Research question one assessed the relevance of LMX theory for exploring important school counseling outcomes and function as an initial step in the exploration and evaluation of school counselors' advocacy efforts. Research questions two through four reflected initial steps toward understanding school counselors' perception of comprehensive school counseling programs and factors that influence these perceptions.

1. How well do the relationships expressed in the hypothesized model (Figure 1) fit the data?

- 1A. What is the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship and the mediating impacts of principal decision sharing and school counselor's use of advocacy skills on program implementation discrepancy?
- 1B. What is the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship as compared with the mediating impact of program implementation discrepancy on job satisfaction and turnover intentions?
- 2. What is the factor structure of the *School Counseling Program Implementation Survey*?
- 3. To what degree do school counselors perceive that implementing a Comprehensive Developmental Counseling Program is important?
- 4. What is the effect of how recently school counselors attended a school counseling conference, completed a graduate-level school counseling course, and how frequently they read ASCA publications on their perceptions of the importance of comprehensive school counseling programs?

#### Definition of Key Terms

Constructs utilized in this study are operationally defined below.

*Comprehensive school counseling program* was defined as developmental, data-driven, and preventative programs that meet the academic, personal/social, and career needs of all students through a four pronged delivery system as outlined in the ASCA National Model.



*Principals' decision sharing* was defined by school counselors' perception of their principals engaging in consulting, delegating, and informing behaviors specific to decisions that affect the school counselor or her or his role.

*Principal-school counselor relationship* was defined in accordance with Leader-member Exchange theory. The relationship between a superior and subordinate is characterized by trust, respect, and obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). The degree to which school counselors perceive these traits are present will represent the quality of the relationship.

*Program implementation discrepancy* was defined by the degree to which school counselors report engaging in the school counseling activities that they prefer and implementing aspects of a comprehensive school counseling program that they feel are important. Program implementation discrepancy is conceptualized as the outcome of the role definition process.

*School counselors* were defined as licensed or credentialed professionals who currently are employed as a public school counselor.

*School counselors' job satisfaction* was defined by school counselor reports of how satisfied they are with their relationship with stakeholders and the amount of satisfaction they gain through their work.

*School counselor use of advocacy skills* was defined as school counselors' perception of their use of advocacy skills, as delineated by Trusty and Brown (2005).

*Turnover intentions* was defined by the likelihood that school counselors report that they will look for another job outside of their school or take another job outside of their school within the next year.

## Organization of this Study

This study is presented in five chapters. In Chapter I, the literature pertaining to Leader-member exchange theory, the process of defining school counselors' roles through social exchanges, school counselor job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, is introduced. Additionally, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, and construct definitions are presented. In Chapter II, a comprehensive review of school counselors' role definition, LMX theory, relevant research related to the constructs of interest, and the rationale for the development of the hypothesized model is offered. In Chapter III, the methodology for this study, including description of the participants, sampling strategy, procedures, research questions and hypotheses, instrumentation, analytic strategies accompanying each research question, and findings from a pilot study are presented. In Chapter IV, the results of the full study are delineated. In Chapter V, the results are discussed and implications presented.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The services and interventions that school counselors provide, how they spend their time, and the focus and scope of the programs that they implement contribute to how school counselors' roles are defined. School counselors have struggled to define their roles in accordance with their beliefs about school counseling (Hutchinson, Barrick, & Groves, 1986; Mustaine, Pappalardo, & Wyrick, 1996; Partin, 1993; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press), in alignment with best practice recommendations (ASCA, 2005; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Carter, 1993; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press), and in competition with stakeholders' beliefs (Jackson et al., 2002; Paisley & Borders, 1995). Although the profession has made considerable strides in defining what school counselors' role should be (ASCA, 2005), individual school counselors continue to struggle with defining their role in their districts and buildings (Rayle, 2006; Scarborough & Culbreth in press).

Role definition has implications for school counselors as well as the stakeholders they serve. When school counselors' face challenges to their role some may become dissatisfied, choose to leave the profession, or acquiesce to providing services that are inconsistent with their beliefs about best practice (Baker, 2000). As a result, the needs of students and school communities may not be met (Scarborough & Culbreth, in press).

The purpose of this study was to assess the relevance of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory for developing an understanding of how school counselors'

roles are negotiated at the school level and assessing the potential impact of role definition on school counselors' job satisfaction and intent to continue employment at their current school. Considering school counseling literature in tandem with a LMX research in other fields provided a foundation for designing such a study. In this chapter, the school counseling literature pertaining to the history of the profession and current trends in school counselors' roles are presented followed by a review of LMX theory and a rationale for the development of the hypothesized model that was tested in the current study.

### History of School Counseling

Considering the diverse history of school counseling is important because it provides context for the challenge of role definition and the development of best practice models. The school counseling profession has evolved substantially since the inception of guidance curriculums in the late 1800s (Aubrey, 1977; Baker & Gerler, 2007). For example, the shifts "... from vocational and educational decision making, to personal growth, to responsive services for special 'at-risk' populations, to developmental programs for all students" (Paisley & Borders, 1995, p. 150) are among the significant school counseling programmatic changes that have occurred over the past 100 years. These changes have been driven by individuals with diverse professional identities, developments in social and behavioral science, federal legislation, and school reform (Aubrey; Baker & Gerler; Herr, 2001; Paisley & Borders; Paisley & Hayes, 2003).

### *Professional Identities*

Individuals who did not share a common professional identity shaped the early development of the school counseling profession. For example, guidance in schools initially was non-standardized and taught by classroom teachers (Baker & Gerler, 2007). A school administrator, Jesse Davis, made the first documented attempt to integrate guidance into the school curriculum consistently in 1907 by emphasizing the need to address vocational and moral topics (Aubrey, 1977). The individual who typically is referred to as the Father of Guidance, Frank Parsons, was a social worker by training and emphasized the vocational aspects of guidance (Aubrey). A shared professional identity did not tie the early curriculums together; instead, the focus of a school's guidance curriculum was shaped by the beliefs of those who implemented the program. The overlap among programs that was most evident, however, was in emphasizing vocational aspects of guidance in schools.

### *Social and Behavioral Sciences*

In addition to being impacted by individuals with teaching, school administration, and social work training, developments in the psychology field had a particularly notable impact on what was then called vocational guidance. Aubrey (1977) hypothesized that the psychometric movement of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the development of standardized measures of abilities and interests were critical to the survival of vocational guidance in schools. Further, trait factor psychology was the guiding theoretical foundation used in schools.

Because the emphasis of guidance was on testing and job placement, counseling emerged in schools as a technique rather than a distinct field of study (Aubrey, 1977). That is, counseling was used in conjunction with the *trait and factor* approach, and was a means of matching students to career paths that the psychometric assessment results supported (Baker & Gerler, 2007). At that point, the counseling process was highly directive, and counselors took on an expert role in helping students to select a job or career path (Aubrey).

Although the prominence of the *trait and factor* approach appeared to be indicative of vocational guidance developing a coherent scope of focus, the impact of Carl Rogers (e.g., 1939, 1951) illustrated that the profession did not yet have a solid identity (Aubrey, 1977). Rogers emphasized the emotional experience of students, which was a swift and marked departure from the task-oriented *trait and factor* approach to guidance in schools. The substantial impact of Rogers' person-centered approach to counseling on the focus of school counseling practice illustrated that the profession did not yet have a solid, stable focus.

In addition to Rogerian theory, developmental psychology, learning theory, sociology, and psychiatry also were impacting the developing philosophy of guidance work in schools (Aubrey, 1977). Specifically, the study of career development subsumed what was previously vocational guidance (Aubrey). Thus, the 1950s marked the initial emergence of what are now distinct domains of school counseling services: personal/social and career.

The establishment of professional counseling organizations also affected the practice of school counseling (Baker & Gerler, 2007). The American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA; now the American Counseling Association, ACA) was created in 1952, and ASCA and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) joined APGA in 1953. These organizations attended to the training of school counselors by developing standards that were used to improve the consistency of school counselor preparation programs. Counseling theory was emphasized in these standards.

#### *Federal Legislation and School Reform*

Theoretical developments and the advent of professional organizations were not the only significant forces, however, acting on the evolution of the role of school counselors during this time. Federal legislation and school reform also have played a significant role in shaping school counseling practice (Herr, 2002). Legislation and school reform are frequently connected, and their impact is evident in the growth of school counseling positions and in how school counselors' roles are defined. Specifically, federal legislation and school reform have marked substantial shifts in the focus of school counseling programs between career and academic.

The Soviet's successful launch of the Sputnik I in 1958 spurred The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 (Aubrey, 1977; Baker & Gerler, 2007). NDEA provided funding to support the hiring and training of school counselors who could identify academically talented students and guide them into careers in math and science fields. A 1964 amendment to the NDEA extended funding to support the development of elementary school counseling. At that time, six overarching services characterized

guidance and counseling work in schools: orientation, assessment, information, counseling, placement, and follow-up (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). These services were still considered ancillary, however, and not an integral programmatic part of schools (Gysbers & Henderson).

The emphasis on career guidance continued in response to subsequent federal legislation (Herr, 2002). The Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 and the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and 1968 resulted in an increased emphasis on workforce preparation in schools, and the transition from school to work was a primary focus of school counselors. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 and subsequent reauthorizations provided funding for programs to meet students' career development needs.

During the mid-1980s, a renewed focus on academics emerged with the school reform proposal *A Nation at Risk* (Herr, 2002). Although school counselors were not included in this proposal, the school reform emphasis on academic preparation for college affected school counseling practice. School counselors' attention shifted away from vocational placement and toward providing services to support college-bound students.

The school counseling emphasis on academics has continued in the twenty-first century. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; U.S. Department of Education, 2002) has led to substantial school reform and an increased emphasis on schools being held accountable for student learning. The school counseling profession has responded to this legislation and school reform by increasing the emphasis on school counselor



accountability (Dahir, 2004; Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006). School counselors are encouraged to demonstrate clearly how their work is making a difference in the students whom they serve (ASCA, 2005; Kaffenberger & Young, 2007).

### *Summary*

Shaw (1973) conceptualized the early history of school counseling aptly by considering both the positive and negative outcomes for the profession.

On the positive side of the ledger, guidance workers have been blessed with a breadth of outlook and skills that few professions can claim. On the debit side, the very diversity of its background coupled with economic, social, and political pressures has made it difficult for guidance specialists to develop an identity, a focus, or a clearly established set of purposes. (p. 28)

As the school counseling profession evolved and began to espouse a comprehensive, developmental programmatic approach, school counselors started to enjoy the benefits Shaw described in tandem with a more coherent purpose as a profession.

### Comprehensive, Developmental School Counseling Program Models

The development and implementation of comprehensive, developmental school counseling program models has been a significant focus of school counseling best practice recommendations for several decades (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). The roots of comprehensive, developmental guidance were formed during the 1960s. For example, Wrenn (1962) advocated for a developmental rather than remedial approach to providing guidance services in schools. Prior to developmental guidance, the emphases included vocational placement and remedial approaches to responding to the emotional needs of students rather than on prevention. The implementation of developmental programs,

however, did not begin until the 1970s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). During the 1980s and 1990s, complex theoretical models were simplified into programs that could be more practically implemented in schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

Delineating the facets of a comprehensive school counseling program and how school counselors might implement such a program has received significant attention. For example, Myrick (1993) outlined the amount of time school counselors should spend on key interventions such as individual counseling, small group counseling, and large group classroom guidance. Gysbers and Henderson (2000) suggested percentages of time school counselors at each building level might spend on broad areas of program implementation: guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support. Further, the inception of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative in 1996 (The Education Trust, 2007), the development of the National Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), and the publication of the ASCA National Model (2003; 2005) were significant events in the effort to define clearly the school counselors' role. The ASCA National Model (2005) reflects the synthesis and integration of best practice recommendations for implementing comprehensive school counseling programs.

#### *Transforming School Counseling Initiative*

The Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) was a three phase project funded by DeWitt Wallace Readers' Digest and housed by the Education Trust (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Phase one began in 1996 when the TSCI engaged in a project aimed at identifying school counselor competencies that could help facilitate the academic success

of all students. Through this process a *New Vision*, or definition of what school counseling should be, was created by The Education Trust and for school counseling

The TSCI emphasized the role of school counselors in closing the achievement gap and deemphasized a mental health approach to school counseling (House & Hayes, 2002). From this *New Vision* five domains emerged: leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, counseling and coordination, and assessment and use of data (Perusse & Goodnough, 2001). These domains were developed to guide school counselors' practice. In addition to the creating a *New Vision* for school counselors, *essential elements of change* were identified for counselor preparation (Perusse & Goodnough). These *essential elements of change* are areas that the TSCI recommended that counselor preparation programs attend to in order to facilitate the implementation the *New Vision* for school counselors. For example, admission criteria for school counseling candidates and curriculum content/sequence are among

*Essential elements of change.* Phase two of the TSCI consisted of offering ten planning grants for counselor preparation programs and school district partners who would work together to develop models for school counselor preparation, based on the New Vision. During Phase three, six of those ten partnerships were provided funds to implement the programs that they designed. These programs emphasize training school counselors to implement what the TSCI has defined as the *New Vision* for school counseling (The Education Trust, 2007).

### *National Standards*

The developmental approach to school counseling was defined more explicitly in 1997 when ASCA published *Sharing the Vision: The National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). In this publication, Campbell and Dahir (a) offered a framework for a national model of a school counseling program, (b) identified key components of a school counseling model program, (c) outlined K-12 student competencies in three domains (i.e., academic, career, personal/social) that school counselors should address, (d) articulated a means for systematic delivery of school counseling services to all students, (e) posited school counseling as an integral aspect of the total school mission, and (f) emphasized the importance of credentialed school counselors. The *National Standards* marked a significant step in clarifying the role of school counselors (ASCA, 2005).

### *ASCA National Model*

The ASCA National Model (2005) was developed in 2003 to standardize the practice of school counseling through the creation of “one vision and one voice for school counseling programs” (p. 8). Grounded in the *National Standards*, the ASCA National Model “reflect[s] a comprehensive approach to program foundation, delivery, management and accountability” (ASCA, p. 9). Further, the ASCA National Model functions as the overarching theory that guides school counseling best practice.

As outlined in the ASCA National Model, comprehensive school counseling programs are implemented through a four pronged delivery system: *guidance curriculum*, *individual student planning*, *responsive services*, and *system support* (ASCA, 2005).

Guidance curriculum consists of “structured developmental lessons designed to assist students in achieving the competencies and is presented systematically through classroom and group activities K-12” (ASCA, p. 151). Workshops for parents and other large group instructional activities also fall under guidance curriculum. Individual student planning “consists of school counselors coordinating ongoing systemic activities designed to assist the individual student in establishing personal goals and developing future plans” (ASCA, p. 151). Activities such as advising and assessment of interests, skills, and abilities are part of individual student planning. Responsive services are those “activities that meet students’, parents’, and teachers’ immediate need for referral, consultation or information” (ASCA, p.151). For example, individual or small group counseling, and crisis counseling are responsive services. Finally, system support is defined as “the professional development, consultation, collaboration and teaming, and program management and operation activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total school counseling program” (p. 151). School counselors might attend conferences, provide in-service training to teachers, or consult with their advisory council.

The work that school counselors do is further guided by the themes of *leadership*, *advocacy*, *collaboration and teaming*, and *systemic change* (ASCA, 2005). These themes align closely with the TSCI and emphasize the importance of school counselors working to help close the achievement gap and enhance the academic success of all students. Further, these themes emphasize that school counselors are no longer adjunct members of the school communities but instead integral members of school leadership teams.

### *Summary of School Counseling History*

The scope and practice of school counseling has changed dramatically since the first school guidance programs emerged in the late 1800s. The changes have been influenced by pioneers of the profession and their diverse professional training, advances in social and behavioral sciences, national defense, and educational reform (Aubrey, 1977; Baker & Gerler, 2007, Herr, 2001, Paisley & Borders, 1995; Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Further, “[s]chool counseling has been seen to have different types of relevance for schools depending on the needs of the nation in different historical periods” (Herr, p. 237). Of particular relevance to schools today is the concept of accountability (ASCA, 2005; Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006). School counselors are challenged to move beyond demonstrating what they do to answer the question “how students are different as a result of what we do?” (ASCA, p. 9) At the macro level, researchers are considering outcomes of a comprehensive school counseling program as one means of demonstrating how school counselors are affecting students.

### *Outcomes of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*

Researchers have begun to explore the impact of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs through examining students’ achievement and their perceptions about the school environment and preparedness for the future. Preliminary evidence suggests that students benefit from comprehensive school counseling programs. Much of the empirical evidence to support the use of comprehensive school counseling programs is based on Missouri’s Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP). Adopted in 1984, the

MCGP preceded the National Standards and the ASCA National Model (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

Lapan, Gysbers, and colleagues published a series of studies from a data set of 22,964 students from 236 high schools in Missouri. Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) found that more fully implemented comprehensive school counseling programs at the high school level were associated with students with higher grades, a more positive school climate, greater student access to career and college information, and student perceptions of being well prepared for their future. Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2001) focused on seventh grade students and also found a positive relationship between comprehensive school counseling program implementation and grades. Further, Lapan et al. (2001) found that students' relationships with teachers were better at schools with comprehensive school counseling programs and students' perception of the school environment was more positive than in schools with less fully implemented programs. Brown and Trusty (2005) critiqued the studies conducted by Lapan, Gysbers, and colleagues, emphasizing that the research designs did not allow for causal inferences to be made and relied heavily on self-report data. Thus, it is unclear whether or not comprehensive school counseling programs actually do produce the positive results described by Lapan et al.

Sink and Stroh (2003) assessed differences in achievement tests scores between students who attended schools with highly implemented comprehensive school counseling programs and those with less fully implemented school counseling program. Sink and Stroh found that students' who were continuously enrolled in schools with a

highly implemented school counseling program had higher test scores than students continuously enrolled in schools with no school counseling program. A critique of Sink and Stroh's study indicated that while the results were statistically significant, they might not have practical significance in schools (Brown & Trusty, 2005). Again, then, findings of a positive impact of a comprehensive school counseling program have been called into question.

Because the results of previous studies of developmental school counseling programs have been called into question, further research is needed to evaluate outcomes of comprehensive school counseling programs (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Dimmit, Carey, McGannon, & Henningson, 2005; Whiston, 2002). The need for more empirical support of best practice models is not surprising given the history of the school counseling profession. Not only is it reasonable to expect a degree of lag time between the publication of a best practice model (e.g., ASCA National Model, 2003, 2005) and consistent implementation of that model (Walsh, Barrett, & DePaul, 2007), but also it will take time for a substantial body of program evaluation outcome research to be conducted.

#### School Counseling Program Implementation Discrepancy

One challenge to evaluating the outcomes of comprehensive school counseling programs is that not all school counselors are implementing the ASCA National Model. Further, it is unclear whether or not school counselors want to implement best practice models in their schools and if they perceive that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important. Thus, some researchers seeking to close the gap



between ideal and current school counseling practices have considered the discrepancy between how school counselors are spending their time and how they would prefer to spend their time.

### *Communication of Best Practice*

The discrepancy approach to researching role definition is particularly relevant at this point in time. Although the ASCA National Model was designed to guide school counseling practice, not all school counselors may be familiar with this model. The dissemination of best practice recommendations to practitioners is an ongoing process (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Counselor preparation programs, professional publications, and school counseling conferences are among the ways that current trends are communicated to practitioners.

*Counselor preparation.* Counselor preparation programs are charged with communicating the current trends of the profession to counselors-in-training (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs; CACREP, 2001). The counselor preparation program is the foundation for the development of school counselors' professional identities (Brott & Myers, 1999). The information and experiences that school counselors gain during their training, therefore, are likely to shape their beliefs about the role of a school counselor and how they implement their role post-graduation. As described previously, the school counseling profession has undergone significant changes in its scope and practice. The best practice models and recommendations that school counselors learned about during their training, therefore,

are likely to be connected to when they were enrolled in coursework pertaining to the school counseling profession.

*Professional publications.* Professional publications function as gatekeepers of information for a profession (Alexander, Kruczek, Zagelbaum, & Ramirez, 2003). The information contained in such publications is illustrative of best practice. Although *Professional School Counseling* was found to be the most widely read journal by practicing school counselors, only 40% of school counselors reported reading this flagship journal (Bauman, Siegel, Davis, Falco, Seabolt, & Symanski, 2002). Further, Bauman et al found that 22% of school counselors do not read or consult any type of professional literature, including newsletters. Thus, many school counselors may not be aware of the current trends described in professional publications.

*Conferences.* School counseling conferences serve as a means of sharing information about the practice of school counseling through presentations and networking. School counselors who are involved in professional organizations (such as through conference attendance) are more likely to engage in their role in a way that is consistent with professional standards (Baker, 2000). ASCA hosts an annual school counseling conference and anticipates approximately 2,000 attendees in 2008 (ASCA, 2006). Forty-four state school counseling conferences are listed on ASCA's website for the 2007-2008 academic year (ASCA). In some areas, local conferences may be available as well. For example, The University of Georgia has used funding from the TSCI to host local *Best Practice Conferences* (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Although the percentage of practicing school counselors who attend conferences is difficult to estimate, the

prevalence of school counseling conferences indicate that this is an important means of communicating information about the practice of school counseling.

Although engaging in school counseling coursework, reading professional publications, and attending conferences are not the only ways that school counselors learn about best practice recommendations, they are among the larger scale means of disseminating information to practitioners. For example, other methods that might be utilized by smaller numbers of school counselors at a time include continuing education workshops, school district level trainings, and clinical supervision. The influence of such factors on school counselors' perception of their role is largely unknown (Dimmit et al., 2005).

#### *School Counselors' Role Perceptions*

Developing an understanding of how school counselors perceive comprehensive school counseling programs is important because their beliefs are likely to shape the programs and services offered to students. Limited current information is available that provides insight into school counselors' perception of their role or the factors that influence their beliefs about best practice recommendations.

Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) assessed practicing school counselors' propensity to endorse statements that were congruent or incongruent with best practice models. The authors reported mean responses to item stems but did not report other descriptive statistics, such as standard deviations, that might have provided insight into the variability of responses. Thus, it is unclear from this study whether school counselors consistently endorse statements that are congruent or incongruent with best practice.

Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, and Skelton (2006) considered the similarities and differences in counselors-in-training, practicing school counselors, and principals' perception of the role of rural school counselors. The groups perceived the role of rural school counselor similarly. These authors, however, did not report within group variance (e.g., variance among school counselor perception) or compare the respondents' perceptions to best practice models for school counselors. Inferences, therefore, cannot be drawn as to whether or not school counselors are in agreement or if their perceptions align with best practice.

Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, and Jones (2004) sought to assess school counselors' perception of "the degree of emphasis that should ideally be given to TSCI domains" (p. 1) and the National Standards. There are, however, substantial limitations in the data analytic strategies they used. The authors reported school counselors' perception of each item level and did not report full scale scores. Thus, the conclusions drawn were specific to aspects of TSCI or National Standards rather than either best practice recommendation as a whole. For example, the authors indicated that respondents' mean rating of items stems with the word *data* or the phrase *system wide* were frequently rated among the lowest of all the items stems. Conclusions about school counselors' perceptions of the National Standards as a whole or domains of TSCI could not be drawn from the data. The authors did indicate, however, that as a group, school counselors were not consistent in their perceptions and that there were significant differences in beliefs based upon school level (e.g., elementary, middle/jr. high, or high school). Thus, Perusse

et al.'s findings indicate that school counselors as a whole may not be in agreement about how to define their role.

Scarborough and Culbreth (in press) assessed the alignment between school counselors' preferences for how they spend their time and "the interventions that are associated with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program (counseling, curriculum, consultation, coordination)" (p. 9). The authors found that school counselors preferred to spend more time on the interventions that are consistent with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program and less time on activities that are non-guidance related such as test coordination or scheduling.

Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) may offer the most insight into school counselors' perception of best practice models. The authors found that school counselors in eight states where some degree of a Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (CGCP) was adopted perceived that CGCPs were very important. Further, Sink and Yillik-Downer explored sources of variance in perceived importance. The authors found that background variables (e.g., case load, location, years of experience) had little practical significance. The predictor variable that held the most practical significance for explaining variance in perceived importance of CGCP is task concerns. The construct of task concerns was defined as feeling anxious about changes to their role or barriers to changing their role. Although this study does provide support that some school counselors do perceive best practice models to be important, it is essential to note that the participants consisted of school counselors employed in states that have adopted some form of CGCP. Not all states have adopted a comprehensive approach to school

counseling (Sink & McDonald, 1998; Zalaquett, 2005). Additionally, the first iteration of the ASCA National Model was published two years after the publication of this study. As such, the definition of a comprehensive school counseling program has evolved since this study was published.

*Discrepancy: Best Practice and Actual Practice*

...[I]n spite of the best efforts of professional associations, accrediting bodies, and training programs to define the profession of school counseling, studies cited in the literature indicate that the actual functions of counselors in schools do not always reflect what have been identified as the best practices in school counseling. (Brott & Myers, 1999, p. 339-340)

Initial investigations into the discrepancy between actual school counseling practices and best practices began with Ashcraft's (1966) study. Ashcraft compared school counselor reports of their actual duties with the duties outlined by ASCA in their Statement of Policy for secondary school counselors. Although Ashcraft did not make interpretations based upon his findings, this study marked the first empirical investigation comparing school counselors' current practice to best practice recommendations at the time.

More recently, researchers have made direct comparisons between how school counselors are spending their time and best practice. There is significant variation, however, in the amount of school counselors' time that is dedicated to best practice activities and how much time is consumed by non-counseling duties (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Johnson, 1993; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press). For example, Burnham and Jackson found the amount of time school counselors spent on individual

counseling ranged from 2% to 75% with a mean of 24.4 and a standard deviation of 15.2. “[A] number of functions that are given strong emphasis in ASCA’s position papers and the CACREP Standards for counselor training curricula are not being carried out with equal emphasis in practice” (Johnson, p. 64). From this information, it appears that a discrepancy continues to remain between current and best practice.

Although research examining factors that influence the discrepancy between current practice and best practice may seem ideal, the lack of clear evidence that school counselors want to implement best practice models indicates that the discrepancy between actual and preferred practice might also be important. Possibly due to the evolution of the role of school counselors and the lack of clarity regarding what school counselors would like their role to look like, researchers (Hutchinson et al., 1986, Mustaine et al., 1996; Olson, 1983; Partin, 1993; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press; Tennyson, Miller, Skovholt, & Williams, 1989) have considered discrepancies between how school counselors are spending their time and how they would prefer to spend their time. This approach to exploring challenges to role definition does not assume that all school counselors want to be practicing in a way that aligns with best practice.

#### *Discrepancy: Actual and Preferred Practice*

Olson (1983) conducted the first study of the discrepancy between school counselors’ actual and preferred use of time. Olson considered the discrepancy between the percentage of time school counselors were spending on activities and the percentage of time they would prefer to spend on those activities. The discrepancy was calculated for five broad categories of activities: assistance to administration, assistance to parents,

assistance to teachers, assistance to students, and research or follow up. Olson found a significant difference between actual and preferred percentage of time spent on four of the five categories.

Throughout the 1980s, researchers exploring discrepancies between secondary school counselors' actual and ideal preferences found similar results. Hutchinson et al. (1986) asked secondary school counselors to rank order school counselor functions in terms of their time allocation preferences. Next, the authors compared the ideal rank orders to the ranking of how the same counselors spend their time. Only two of the top five functions overlapped (individual personal counseling and academic counseling), meaning that school counselors reported spending more time on activities that they perceived less important (e.g., testing, parent conferences, and scheduling) than important (e.g., group counseling, career and life planning, and classroom activities). Tennyson et al. (1989) assessed the discrepancy between secondary school counselors' frequency of performing activities and perceived importance of performing each activity. The findings from this study indicated that there was a discrepancy between frequency of performing activities and perceived importance; That is, the way that secondary school counselors were spending their time did not reflect their beliefs about ideal practice.

Studies published during the 1990s yielded similar results to the earlier explorations into the discrepancy between actual and preferred school counseling practices. Partin (1993) surveyed school counselors across all school levels and found significant differences between the ideal and actual percentage of time spent on five of eight categories. Mustaine et al. (1996) conducted a study similar to Partin's but used



number of hours rather than percentage of time to assess discrepancies. Mustaine et al. found significant differences between the actual and preferred amount of time spent in four of nine areas.

*Factors affecting the discrepancy.* More recently, researchers have shifted from describing the discrepancy between actual and preferred school counseling practices to identifying factors that might explain or reduce this discrepancy. Some of these writings are conceptual. For example, Coll and Freeman (1997) and Carlson (1989) indicated the history of the school counseling profession and an inability to maintain a consistent role have contributed to discrepancies in practice. Paisley and Borders (1995) suggested the lack of control that school counselors hold over daily activities might be influential in how they spend their time.

There also exists a growing body of literature on empirical investigations into factors affecting the discrepancy between actual and preferred school counseling practice. Mustaine et al. (1996), in addition to exploring the discrepancy between actual and preferred school counseling practice, prompted school counselors to indicate which factors explained the discrepancy. The authors provided a list of eight explanations as well as the opportunity to check “other” and provide a different response. Respondents most frequently endorsed the explanation that their administration shapes school counselors’ role and duties (49%). The second most frequently endorsed explanation was school counselor: student ratio (39%). This study marked an initial venture into the exploration of why the discrepancy between actual and preferred practices continues to exist.

Scarborough and Culbreth (in press) evaluated factors that predict discrepancies between how school counselors are spending their time and how they would prefer to spend their time. In a multi-state survey of school counselors ( $n = 361$ ), 28% of the variance in the discrepancy between actual and preferred use of time was explained by seven variables: school level, years of experience as a school counselor, outcome expectancy of self-efficacy, membership in ASCA, efficacy expectancy for individual counseling, school climate, and implementation of the National Standards for School Counseling programs. Scarborough and Culbreth further examined discrepancies at the subscale levels of counseling, consultation, coordination, and curriculum. The variables that were found to be significant predictors across the aforementioned intervention were school level, years of experience, school climate, incorporation of the National Standards, and outcome expectancy of self-efficacy.

More specifically, Scarbough and Culbreth (in press) found that school counselors who practice at the elementary level compared to the high school level, have more years of experience, and work in a more positive school climate report a smaller discrepancy between actual and preferred practice. Those school counselors who have attempted to engage in the best practice recommendations of incorporating the National Standards into their programs and who believe that the tasks that they perform lead to positive outcomes reported a smaller discrepancy. Perceived support by others in their school community also was found to be a factor that narrowed the discrepancy between actual and preferred practice.

## The Role of School Principals

The discrepancy between how school counselors are spending their time and how they would prefer to spend their time remains a struggle for the profession (Scarborough & Culbreth, in press). This may be due in part to the substantial role that principals play in defining school counselors' job descriptions (Dahir, 2000; Mustaine et al, 1996, Ponec & Brott, 2000; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994) and the reality that some principals' perceptions of the school counselor role are not up to date with the significant, recent changes in the school counseling profession (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Perusse et al., 2004).

Amatea and Clark (2005) conducted qualitative interviews with 26 school administrators and found that their conceptualization of school counselors' role paralleled distinct historical trends in the evolution of the school counseling profession. The least frequently endorsed conceptualization of school counselors' role is the one that most closely parallels with contemporary literature. That is, only 12% of school administrators conceptualized the role of school counselors as *an innovative school leader, a description* that most closely aligns with the ASCA National model. The majority of the school administrators interviewed described school counselors' roles in a manner that was more consistent with the developments in counseling in guidance during the 1980s and 1990s. These administrators emphasized the school counselor's role in providing direct services such as classroom guidance and individual counseling and deemphasized collaborative work with school staff and leadership.

Although Amatea and Clark's (2005) findings might point toward considering the time of principals' training as an explanatory factor for their conceptualization of school

counselors' role, other researchers have suggested that it is principals' experience working in schools that shapes their perceptions. Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) surveyed principals several years after they completed a course with school counselors-in-training that was designed to help both groups better understand the other group's roles. Years of experience was positively correlated with principals endorsing statements that were incongruent with best practice standards for school counselors. In this study, time working in schools seems to have a greater impact on role perceptions than coursework.

It is left, therefore, to individual school counselors to educate their principal about the roles and functions of school counselors (Murray, 1995; Meyers, 2005). Otherwise, school counselors' roles may continue to be defined for them by individuals who may have limited knowledge of the school counseling profession (Borders & Paisley, 1995). To do this effectively, the relationship between school counselors and their principals must be strong (Meyers).

#### Leader-Member Exchange Theory

The relationship between school counselors and their principals has been described as essential to school counseling program implementation and maintenance (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Murray, 1995; Zalaquett, 2005) and as a powerful force that affects school counselors' roles (Dollarhide et al., 2007). A review of counseling and educational literature revealed no empirical studies in which researchers have explored the explanatory power of principal-school counselor relationships. A review of organizational psychology literature did reveal, however, a theoretical foundation that has

been applied by researchers in numerous settings to evaluate the outcomes of superior-subordinate relationships and explain the process of role definition. This theory, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, provides the theoretical foundation for the current study.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory is a unique approach to conceptualizing and explaining organizational outcomes. The relationship that develops between a leader and a subordinate is the primary unit of analysis (Gerstner & Day, 1997). LMX theory is grounded in the belief that there are differences in the quality of relationships between leaders and their subordinates, referred to as *members* (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Linden & Graen, 1980). The value of the theory resides in the hypothesis that relationship quality is predictive of outcomes at the individual, group, and organizational levels (Gerstner & Day; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Specifically, higher quality relationships are associated with more positive organizational and member outcomes as well as fewer work related problems.

The organizational and member outcomes that are of interest in this study are school counseling program implementation discrepancy, school counselor job satisfaction, and school counselor turnover intentions. Program implementation discrepancy is the degree to which school counselors report engaging in the school counseling activities that they prefer and implementing aspects of a comprehensive school counseling program that they believe are important. A purpose of this study will be to assess the relevance of the role definition process operationalized by Graen (1976) for explaining variance in school counseling program implementation discrepancy. Job

satisfaction and turnover intentions are constructs that are frequently found to be outcomes of superior-subordinate relationship quality (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The explanatory power of principal-school counselor relationships on school counselor job satisfaction and turnover intentions will be assessed in this study.

In the following pages, relevance of LMX theory to principal-school counselor relationships will be discussed, the history of LMX theory and development of the role definition process outlined, stages of research explained, and methodological challenges and recommendations for research presented.

#### Relevance of LMX Theory to Principal-School Counselor Relationships

LMX theory has been applied across a variety of organizations, levels of management, and sizes of leader-member work units (Burns & Otte, 1999; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Myers, 2006), as well as on a limited basis in educational settings (Heck, Bedeian, & Day, 2005; Myers). Although this line of inquiry has not been extended to principal-school counselor relationships, much of the language used by LMX theorists to operationalize relationship quality and ideal relationships is consistent with the language that authors of school counseling and educational literature have used to characterize high quality principal-school counselor relationships.

LMX theorists Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) defined the construct of superior-subordinate relationships as the degree to which trust, respect, and mutual obligation exist within a dyad. According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991; 1995), dyads of superiors and subordinates move toward a *partnership* as trust, respect, and mutual obligation develop.

Trust and respect are terms consistently used by authors of school counseling and educational literature to describe effective principal-school counseling relationships (Dollarhide et al., 2007; Kaplan, 1995; Meyers, 2005; Ponec & Brott, 2000; Zalaquett, 2005). For school counselors to engage in partnerships with their principals, trust must be present in the dyad (Meyers; Wesley, 2001). Much like LMX theorists Graen and Uhl-Bien described, as trust between a principal and school counselor increases, then the working relationship likely would move toward a partnership.

In LMX literature, partnerships are defined as relationships that have moved beyond the downward influence of a superior on a subordinate to a mutually beneficial and mutually influential dynamic (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). The current emphasis on school counselors becoming integral members of the leadership team (ASCA, 2005) is similar to the emphasis that LMX theorists place on leaders and members developing partnerships (Graen & Uhl-Bien). School counselors are encouraged not to be silent helpers whose roles are defined for them (Jackson, et al., 2002; Perusse et al., 2004), but instead to be visible leaders and advocates who work with stakeholders, including principals, to support the mission of the school (ASCA).

The similarity in language indicates that much of what has been defined as characteristic of high quality relationships in the organizational psychology literature also is present in the descriptions of high quality relationships in schools. Further, the ideal of superiors and subordinates developing working partnerships is consistent with school counseling best practice recommendations. The way LMX theorists conceptualize relationship quality, therefore, may be relevant for investigations focused on principal-

school counselor relationships. Parallels between school counseling literature and LMX theorists' conceptualization of the role definition process are also evident.

### History and Role Definition Process

LMX Theory is an outgrowth of Role Theory and Social Exchange Theory (Graen, 1976). Role theorists describe a process through which work roles are defined (Burns & Otte, 1999). The role definition process is grounded in the belief that a leader is in a position to dictate roles authoritatively and, therefore, holds the full responsibility for role definition (Kantz & Kahn, 1966). The messages sent from a leader to a member comprise a set of *role expectations* (Kantz & Kahn). For example, a principal (leader) might say to a new school counselor (member), "You are expected to be in the classrooms regularly" These expectations are then interpreted by the school counselor in what is referred to as the *received role* (Kantz & Kahn). The school counselor might understand that he or she is expected to conduct classroom guidance and set her or his schedule so that he or she can be in each classroom twice a month. Finally, member behavior in the role sends messages back to a principal and denotes *monitored behavior* (Kantz & Kahn). For example, the principal might then clarify that the expectation is for the school counselor to provide classroom guidance each week rather than every other week.

Social exchange theory states that one member of a dyadic relationship voluntarily offers resources to the other member with the expectation of a return at an unspecified later date (Homans, 1974). For example, a principal might allocate funds to hire a part-time social worker to protect a school counselor from taking on social work



responsibilities. Later in the school year, the principal might expect the school counselor to be amenable to a request that is typically outside the scope of what he or she does for the school. The resources that are exchanged may be tangible or intangible (Paglis & Green, 2002). The basic premise, however, lies in the expectation that the exchange ultimately will be mutually beneficial (Homans).

Graen (1976), an early LMX theorist, expanded on Role Theory and integrated social exchange concepts to introduce a three-phase process of leader-member behavior and socialization that result in role definition. Graen described the role development process as *role taking*, *role making*, and *role routinization*. *Role taking* consists of one-way transmissions from the leader regarding desired behavior to the member. The second phase, *role making*, is a function of relationship development where both the leader and the member collaborate to define the role of member. Once a member's role is defined the typical pattern of social exchanges, or what each member of the dyad is willing to offer the other, is established. This final phase is *role routinization*.

#### *Role Making*

The heart of LMX theory is the *role making* phase. The reciprocal aspect to the role definition process separates LMX theory from other theoretical foundations. The majority of leadership theories typically assume that a leader's interactions with her or his members are roughly equivalent or that a leader typically engages in the same leadership style with all members (Graen & Schiemann, 1978). For example, a leadership style (e.g., transactional or transformational) is considered to be what affects outcomes in employees or organizations. From an LMX theoretical perspective, the reciprocal aspect

of *role making* may be the most salient piece to school counselors wishing to affect change in their roles.

The foundation for an interactional or reciprocal aspect to role definition is the latitude to negotiate work roles that a leader offers a member. *Negotiating latitude* is the freedom allowed to a member by the leader to affect her or his role development (Dansereau et al., 1975). Dansereau et al. conceptualized this construct on a continuum. Low negotiating latitude is associated with a member having no influence on her or his role definition, whereas high negotiating latitude is characterized by a leader supporting and aiding a follower in role definition.

Although negotiating latitude is considered a social exchange (Dansereau et al., 1975), it is treated differently than other social exchanges in LMX literature and research. Most social exchanges are viewed as *outcomes* of relationship quality. Negotiating latitude, however, is considered to be an integral part of assessing relationship quality from the member perspective (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Paglis & Green, 2002). Negotiating latitude is viewed as evidence of trust, respect, and mutual obligation existing within the dyad. As such it is conceptualized as the foundation for other social exchanges to occur. The social exchanges that represent the process of defining a member's role (e.g., communication between a superior and subordinate) are considered outcomes of relationship quality (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Paglis & Green).

#### *Application to Principals and School Counselors*

When Graen (1976) integrated social exchange theory with Role Theory to create LMX Theory, he hypothesized that the member can influence the role definition process.

Consistent with this hypothesis, researchers exploring principals' conceptualization of school counselors' roles and principals' support of school counseling programs have found that school counselors do influence the principals with whom they work. Kirchner and Setchfield (2005) found that the way principals conceptualize school counselors' role is shaped by their work with school counselors. Similarly, critical incidents with school counselors substantially influence the amount of support that principals provide for school counseling programs (Dollarhide et al., 2007). Thus, there is evidence in school counseling research findings to suggest that, like Graen hypothesized, there is an interactional component between principals and school counselors that affects school counselor role definition.

### *Summary*

LMX Theory is a unique approach to conceptualizing the process of role definition. Theorists emphasize the reciprocal process of *role making* that allows a member to work with a leader to negotiate her or his role (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). The quality of the relationship between the leader and the member is hypothesized to affect the amount of latitude a member has to engage in the role making process and to negotiate her or his role (Dansereau et al., 1975). Researchers have used a variety of research designs to confirm LMX theory-based hypotheses and to assess the relevance of LMX theory across settings.

### Stages of Research using LMX Theory

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) conceptualized LMX theory research as four distinct stages contributing to the evolution and utility of the theory. Although 'stage' may imply

that sequential movement from one distinct domain to the next, Schriesheim, Castro, and Cogliser (1999) pointed out that attention has been given simultaneously to multiple stages of research as the theory has evolved. Graen and Uh-Bien's four stage conceptualization, therefore, may be more useful in separating and conceptualizing research designs than as a sequential evolutionary outline of LMX theory development.

Stage one research designs consist of evaluating the hypothesis that differences in dyadic relationships exist. In stage two designs, the predictive qualities of the relationship are explored. The focus of stage three research designs is the determinants of a high quality relationship. Alternatively, systemic applications of the theory such that networks of dyads can be considered simultaneously are considered to be stage four research designs. The focus of this proposed study will be on stage two, or considering outcomes of relationship quality. In the following section, significant findings in stage one and stage two research designs will be reviewed. Stage three and stage four will be discussed to the degree that they may inform future directions for school counseling research.

### *Stage One Research*

Dansereau et al. (1975) proposed that relationships between a leader and members are heterogeneous. There are differences in the quality of the relationships between a given leader and her or his members. This is a marked departure from the majority of leadership theories that typically assume that a leader's interactions with her or his members are roughly equivalent or that a leader typically engages in the same leadership style with all members (Graen & Schiemann, 1978). Shifting away from a sole focus on leader characteristics or behaviors implies that leaders do not act in isolation and that

there is a reciprocal aspect to a relationship that has substantive implications for leaders, members, and organizations.

The proposition of heterogeneous relationships was the initial focus of research grounded in LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). Findings across multiple types of organizations indicated that relationships differ among dyads of a leader and a member (Graen & Uhl-Bein; Gerstner & Day, 1997). As the theory evolved, a question emerged as to whether or not differences in relationship quality were independent or dependent of a work group (e.g., a principal and the four school counselors with whom he or she works). The independent or dependent nature of the relationship qualities has substantial implications for the analysis of data (Schriesheim et al., 1999). Independence of data is an assumption of many analytic strategies (Rencher, 2002). Dansereau and colleagues (Dansereau, 1995; Dansereau, et al. 1995; Keller & Dansereau, 1995) have promoted a conceptual and empirical base that indicates that relationship quality is purely dyadic and independent of other dyads in a work unit. The majority of researchers conducting investigations grounded in LMX theory have treated the dyads as independent (Gerstner & Day).

#### *Stage Two Research*

The fundamental belief that relationship quality has substantive implications is consistent across theorists and over time (Bernerth, Armenakis, Field, Giles, & Walker, in press). The majority of investigations grounded in LMX theory have focused on the outcomes of the relationship between leaders and members (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995,

Ilies, Nahgang, & Morgeson, 2007), with research questions aimed at establishing the explanatory power of the dyadic relationship in relation to specific outcomes.

Initially, the quality of the relationship was defined discretely as “in-group” and “out-of-group” relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In-group relationships were characterized by reciprocal influence and a high degree of mutual trust, respect, and obligation; whereas, out-of-group relationships perceptions were characterized by downward influence and low levels of trust, respect, and obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bein). Regardless of the choice of measurement instrument, cut scores were established so that approximately 25% of the dyads were associated with the “in-group”, 25% of the dyads were labeled “out-of-group”, and the middle group frequently was not utilized in analyses (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Some researchers continue to utilize the categorical approach of in-group and out-of group relationships to evaluate the effect of the relationship (e.g., Muller & Lee, 2002, Thibodeaux & Lowe, 1996), while other researchers have treated the relationship as a continuous variable (e.g., Kacmar, Witt, Zivunska, & Gully, 2003; Myers, 2006; Linden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). Graen and Uhl-Bien indicated that treating the relationship variable as continuous is consistent with the evolution of LMX theory.

The focus of inquiries has crossed multiple affective and behavioral domains (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Affective constructs frequently explored through an LMX theoretical framework include job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, role stress, and turnover intentions. Behavioral outcomes include member creativity, innovative behavior, productivity, performance, and turnover. The primary LMX

construct, relationship quality, tends to be a stronger predictor of affective outcomes than behavioral outcomes (Gerstner & Day). For example, more of the variance in turnover intentions was explained by relationship quality than was actual turnover rate (Gerstner & Day). Burns and Otte (1999) suggested that one reason for the small effect size of behavioral measures is the moderating influence of organizational factors, such as job tasks, which affect behaviors, such as performance.

Researchers also have evaluated the explanatory power of the relationship as the unit of analysis compared to focusing on leadership style. Proponents of utilizing the relationship as the primary unit of analysis have posited that the dyadic approach of a relationship frequently explains more of the variance in outcome measures than does focusing on the leader alone (Graen et al., 1982; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Critics have argued that some of the analytic strategies utilized to compare research grounded in relationship quality to research focused on leadership styles do not adequately address both the relationship as the primary unit of analysis and the leader as the primary unit of analysis (Dansereau, 1995; Schriesheim et al., 1999). The few studies that utilize appropriate analytic strategies (e.g., within and between analysis) to address the comparison of a dyadic approach and leader-focused approach have found mixed support for the dyadic approach compared to leader-focused approaches (Schriesheim et al.; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1992). Burns and Otte (1999) recommended a holistic approach to evaluating organizational outcomes that considers leader characteristics in addition to the relationship.

### *Stage Three Research*

Because high quality relationships are beneficial to organizations and members, research aimed at establishing a prescriptive approach to relationship building also has emerged. The Leadership Making model (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991) marked an initial step toward learning how high quality relationships can be developed (Schriesheim et al., 1999; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The Leadership Making model is grounded in the belief that all members should have access to the benefits of high quality relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). While differences in relationship quality exist, the focus of this stage of LMX theory-based inquiry is on identifying factors that might contribute to increasing the proportion of high quality relationships and the process by how such relationships are formed (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Researchers engaging in qualitative and longitudinal inquiries in the area of relationship development identified a ‘life-cycle’ of relationship building (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). The cycle consists of three phases that parallel Graen’s earlier (1976) conceptualization of the role making process. The language of the relationship building, however, shifted from Graen’s (1976) *role taking*, *role making*, and *role routinization* to *role finding*, *role making*, and *role implementation*. For dyads to progress through the relationship building phases, an offer must be made and accepted to improve the quality of the relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Offers take the form of social exchanges, humor, or appropriate disclosure of personal information. For example, a principal could offer the social exchange of involving a school counselor in a decision that affects her or his role and the school counselor could accept that offer by stating her or his preference.



Either the leader or the member can make the offer (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The result of such an offer is that the relationship shifts to a higher level of trust, respect, or mutual obligation.

Although all dyads do not move beyond the initial phase of relationship building, *role finding* (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995), for those that do the quality of the relationship develops quickly. Linen et al. (1993) found that dyads can move through the relationship building stages in as short as two weeks. Paglis and Green (2002) found no difference in relationship quality based on dyadic tenure in a sample of leaders and members who worked together between 0.3 and 7 years.

#### *Stage Four Research*

Systemic applications of LMX theory include multi-level analysis and network analysis (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Multi-level analyses consider the impact of multiple levels of supervisory relationships. Applied to schools, a multilevel approach might consider the superintendent-principal relationship and the principal-school counselor relationship as independent variables. Network applications utilize the construct of relationship among work group peers as a unit of analysis (Graen & Uhl-Bien). For example, considering outcomes of the quality of relationships among school counselors who work together would constitute the network application of LMX theory. Given the limited use of LMX theory to conduct research in educational settings, this systemic approach to LMX research designs is likely to be most relevant for generating ideas for future research.

## *Discussion*

As LMX theory has evolved, the nature of the differences in relationships was called into question. Although these conceptual differences may be important for researchers interested in the study of organizational leadership when the focus remains on the impact of the dyadic relationship on organizational outcomes and member outcomes (stage two), these differences appear to impact primarily the research questions and associated analytic strategies. The impact on research designs occurs with the choice to treat dyads either as independent or as part of dependent groups. The independent treatment of dyads, or within dyad approach, will be utilized in this study. This treatment of the data allows for the testing of the impact of the relationship on outcome variables while considering that some principals may allow some school counselors more latitude to negotiate and define their role than others.

The initial findings associated with stage three are far from the goal of establishing a prescriptive approach to relationship building. The indications that relationship quality develops quickly and tends to remain stable, however, are important to the design of studies aimed at assessing outcomes. Specifically, these findings support that cross-sectional research designs that evaluate outcomes of dyadic relationships that range in tenure, or length of time working together, are an appropriate application of this theory.

### Measurement of LMX Construct

Measurement of relationship quality has received considerable attention and has been a source of criticism. Since the inception of LMX theory, researchers have utilized

a variety of measures ranging from two to twenty-four items to measure relationship quality (Burns & Otte, 1999; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Schriesheim, et al., 1999).

Researchers have adjusted anchor points, the number of Likert-type responses, and made minor changes to the wording of items on the more frequently utilized measures (Paglis & Green, 2002; Schriesheim et al.). The variety and extensive iterations of measurement instruments pose a significant challenge to the validity and evolution of LMX research (Burns & Otte; Schriesheim et al.).

These measurement issues have been attributed, in part, to the lack of clarity in the construct of interest, relationship quality (Bernerth et al., in press; Schriesheim et al., 1999). Graen and Uhl-Bein (1995) addressed these criticisms and argued for a consistent adaptation of the conceptualization of relationship quality as trust, respect, and obligation and adoption of the LMX7 as the preferred measure. This seven-item measure assesses members' perception of the degree to which trust, respect, and mutual obligation exist within their relationship with a leader. The response to Graen and Uhl-Bien, however, was mixed (Schriesheim et al.). Two distinct lines of research and choice of measurement instruments have evolved following Graen and Uhl-Bien's call for the adoption of the LMX7 as the predominant measure of relationship quality.

The response was driven by conceptual arguments rather than articulate concerns about the psychometric properties of the LMX7 instrument. Specifically, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) argued that trust and respect are precursors to social exchange and thus should be the foundation or the measure of relationship. Those who disagreed with Graen and Uhl-Bien advocated for social exchange as the defining characteristic of relationship

quality. Social exchange is grounded in the belief that when “individuals act in ways that benefit others, an implicit obligation for future return is created” (Berneth et al., in press, p. 2). The LMXSX (Berneth et al.) was designed to measure members’ perception of the presence of social exchange rather than trust, respect, and mutual obligation. Those researchers who agreed with Graen and Uhl-Bien have consistently used the LMX7 as a measure of relationship quality (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Paglis & Green, 2002; Schriesheim et al., 1999), whereas researchers wishing to emphasize social exchange as the foundation of the relationship use the LMXSX measure (Berneth et al.).

Attending to the impact of conceptual differences among LMX theorists is important in the design of research studies. In particular, the selection of an operational definition for relationship quality informs decisions regarding assessment instrumentation. The relationship quality construct definition offered by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) is a better fit with the literature describing principal-school counselor relationships (e.g., Dollarhide et al., 2007; Kaplan, 1995; Meyer, 2005; Ponec & Brott, 2000; Zalaquett, 2005) than the social exchange approach to measuring relationship quality. Specifically, the language of Graen and Uhl-Bean’s definition of relationship quality and the LMX7 is similar to the characteristics highlighted by authors describing high quality principal-school counselor relationships (e.g., trust, respect).

#### Hypothesized Model: Role Definition

LMX is a theoretical foundation that may have relevance in exploring why the discrepancy between school counselors’ actual roles and their ideal roles continues to occur and evaluating best practice recommendations for school counselors wishing to

affect changes in their roles. According to LMX theorists, the quality of the relationship between a superior and subordinate is associated with the amount of latitude a subordinate has to negotiate her or his role and is predictive of the quality of job tasks (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Specifically, the stronger the relationship the more latitude a subordinate has to negotiate her or his role and the more likely that the tasks the subordinate is ultimately assigned are favorable. Role negotiation occurs during the *role-making phase* (Graen, 1976). What that negotiation process may look like, however, is not defined explicitly in the literature. Instead, it is simply defined as a series of interactions or social exchanges that occur over time (Gerstner & Day; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien).

Interactional constructs that are present in either LMX theory or school counseling literature on role definition include leaders' decision sharing and school counselors' advocating for their role. Decision sharing is a leader's propensity to inform a member, consult with a member, or delegate to a member decisions that affect that member or her or his role (Paglis & Green, 2002). Advocacy occurs when a school counselor takes action toward reducing the barriers to meet a need, such as defining or clarifying her or his role (Trusty & Brown, 2005). These constructs of decision sharing and advocacy may be relevant to principals and school counselors engaging in the role definition process.

#### *Decision Sharing*

Decision sharing is considered a social exchange because it is an intangible resource offered by a leader to a member. Decision sharing may occur through keeping a

member informed about decisions that affect her or him (Paglis & Green, 2002; Yukl, Wall, & Lepsinger, 1990), consulting with a member about decisions, or delegating decisions to a member (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Paglis & Green; Yukl et al.). Although the leadership behaviors of informing, consulting, and delegating historically have been considered separate constructs in leadership literature and assessments of leaders' behavior (Yukl et al.), Paglis and Green found through a factor analysis of the data that members, in this case bank employees, did not differentiate between the three behaviors. Yukl (personal communication, July 27, 2007) indicated that Paglis and Green's treatment of decision sharing as a unidimensional construct is consistent with current trends in the assessment of leaders' behavior from the subordinate perspective.

As a social exchange construct, decision sharing is considered to be an outcome of relationship quality (Paglis & Green, 2002). When the quality of the dyadic relationship is high, leaders are more likely to provide social exchange resources to subordinates (Linden et al., 1997). Specifically, subordinates in higher quality relationships are involved more frequently in decision making that affects their role than are subordinates in lower quality relationships (Scandura, Graen, & Novak., 1986).

Paglis and Green surveyed dyads of bank managers and bank employees who work together (dyad  $n = 127$ ). A purpose of this study was to determine the correlation between relationship quality and social exchanges. Paglis and Green found a correlation of .65 between the social exchange of bank managers' decision sharing behaviors and bank employees' perception of the quality of the relationship with those managers. There was no significant relationship ( $r = -.10$ ) between the length of time that the dyads had

worked together (0.3 years to 11.0 years) and the bank managers' propensity to engage in decision sharing behaviors.

The social exchange of decision sharing impacts how a subordinate's role is defined (Paglis & Green, 2002; Scandura et al., 1986). Decision sharing is a resource that allows a member an opportunity to negotiate her or his role. For example, if a principal chooses to consult with her or his school counselor about how to include classroom guidance in the specialist rotation, then the school counselor is likely to experience less of a discrepancy between her or his ideal role and current role than if the principal had simply assigned the amount and frequency of classroom guidance the school counselor provides. Further, principal decision sharing may serve as an entry point for a school counselor wishing to advocate for her or his role.

#### *Advocacy*

Advocacy is a theme that guides school counselors' practice (ASCA, 2005). School counselors advocate for the profession (Eriksen, 1997; Kisclica & Robinson, 2001), the students whom they serve (ASCA, 2005; Cooley, 1998; Downing & Harrison, 1990; Myers, Sweeney, & White, 2002; Stone, 2000; Trusty, 1996), and their programs (House & Hayes, 2002; Kuranz, 2002; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press). Although these advocacy efforts can be aimed at a wide array of audiences and focused on a variety of topics or needs, the advocacy efforts that are relevant to LMX research and the role definition process are those that occur at the individual school or building level, are directed toward the principal, and focus on role definition.

A strong relationship between school counselors and their principals is a precursor to advocacy efforts being successful at the building level (Trusty & Brown, 2005). At times, school counselors' choice to advocate for their role may create a tenuous situation where the school counselor is placing her- or himself in opposition to a principal's request (Kaplan, 1995; Trusty & Brown). For example, when he or she is off campus, a principal might ask a school counselor to step into a discipline role. If a school counselor states that discipline is not congruent with her or his role as a school counselor, then the school counselor and principal may be on opposite sides of the discipline issue.

Trusty and Brown (2005) delineated six school counseling advocacy skills: communication skills, collaboration skills, problem-assessment skills, problem-solving skills, organizational skills, and self-care skills. Although these skills are specific to the profession of school counseling, they are not specific to the topic of role definition. As such, some aspects of Trusty and Brown's operationalization of advocacy skills seem more relevant than others to school counselors wishing to affect change in their role or reduce barriers to implementing their programs.

Trusty and Brown (2005) suggested that school counselors use communication and collaboration skills to listen and understand their principal's perspective and to communicate possible solutions to barriers that might be impeding their role. That is, simply stating that discipline is not something school counselors should do is not representative of a school counselor using advocacy skills. Instead, a school counselor might consider listening to what the principal needs. For example, if what is important to the principal is that the discipline situations are deescalated as efficiently as possible so



that students can return to the classroom and continue doing their jobs of being students, then the school counselor may be able to meet that goal. A school counselor could use problem-assessment and problem-solving advocacy skills to determine that he or she can work with students in a way that is role congruent to deescalate the situations that arise while a principal is off campus. The school counselor might suggest that the consequence of major discipline infractions might be tabled until the principal returns. Although the process a school counselor uses to deescalate a student-situation is likely to be different than how a principal might approach the same situation (Kaplan, 1995), through the use of advocacy skills school counselors may be able to attend to the relationship with their principal while promoting their role as a counselor (Trusty & Brown).

Organizational skills are another aspect of the advocacy skill set that may be salient to school counselors wishing to negotiate or redefine their role. Trusty and Brown (2005) emphasized the process of collecting and utilizing data in their definition of organizational skills. For example, a school counselor might conduct a needs' assessment to determine how stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, students) perceive the counseling needs of the school community. The results of the needs assessment could be used to support how the school counselor currently spends her or his time or to advocate for changes to better meet the schools needs. Kaffenberger and Young (2007) acknowledged that using data is a skill and some school counselors may not know how to gather or use data effectively. Kaffenberger and Young published a workbook, *Making Data Work*, which is designed to help school counselors not only make data-driven decisions but also to share that data so they may garner support for their program and role. The emphasis on

encouraging school counselors to use data to support or to advocate for changes to their role is evident in the ASCA National Model (2005) and related publications (ASCA, 2004; Kaffenberger & Young) as well as in recent school counseling literature (e.g., Poynton & Carey, 2006; Studer, Oberman, & Womack, 2006).

### *Advocacy and LMX Theory*

The empirical connection between school counselors' use of advocacy skills and role definition has not been established. LMX theory is a means of conceptualizing why advocacy might affect the role definition process. The connection between school counselors' use of advocacy skills and LMX theory is the idea that both are grounded in the relationship between a superior and a subordinate. Trusty and Brown (2005) emphasized that school counselors' advocacy efforts need to be grounded in strong relationships with principals. The dyadic relationship between a superior and a subordinate is the foundation for outcome investigations guided by LMX theory (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

By applying LMX theory, school counselors' use of advocacy skills can be conceptualized as a social exchange. Social exchanges are the negotiations that occur during the *role making phase* of LMX theory and contribute to the process of role definition (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). Communication with a leader has been considered a social exchange in previous research (Hoffman & Morgeson, 1999; Yrle, Hartman, & Gale, 2002). School counselors' use of advocacy skills may be a form of social exchange because school counselors offer intangible or tangible resources to their principal. For example, school counselors using communication and collaboration skills

may offer principals the intangible resource of being understood by a colleague. Tangible resources associated with school counselors' use of advocacy skills include finding solutions to problems and demonstrating effectiveness with data. These resources are offered by a school counselor to a principal with the expectation that there will be a return on the advocacy efforts.

### *Implications for Research Design*

The social exchanges that occur during the *role making phase* are hypothesized to be influenced by the superior-subordinate relationship and affect the outcome of how a subordinate's role is defined (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995). According to LMX theorists, the quality of the relationship has implications, separate from the social exchanges, for subordinate role definition (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Gerstner, & Day, 1997). A mediating model, therefore, might best explain how principal-school counselor relationship and the social exchanges of principals' decision sharing and school counselors' use of advocacy skills affect the outcome of program implementation discrepancy.

### Hypothesized Model: Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

Program implementation discrepancy also may affect school counselors' experience at work. When school counselors experience challenges to their roles, some may feel dissatisfied or choose to leave the profession early (Baker, 2000). Although the constructs of job satisfaction and turnover intentions have received minimal attention in school counseling literature to date (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006), these constructs have been explored extensively within an LMX theoretical framework (Gerstner & Day,

1997). Extending the LMX theory-based inquiry into job satisfaction and turnover intentions of school counselors is important because such constructs may have practical implications for school counselors, school communities, and principals.

### *School Counseling Research*

DeMato and Curico (2004) assessed trends in elementary school counselors' job satisfaction in Virginia. There was a modest decrease in the percentage of elementary school counselors who reported being satisfied or very satisfied in their jobs between 1988 and 2001. The majority of elementary school counselors (78%) reported being satisfied with their jobs in 2001. The only inferential test that was conducted as part of this study was used to evaluate the relationship between demographic variables and job satisfaction. Although this research did not contribute substantially to understanding why there is variance in job satisfaction, it does appear that there may be opportunities to increase the percentage of elementary school counselors who feel very satisfied with their jobs.

Baggerly and Osborn (2006) evaluated correlates and predictors of school counselors' career satisfaction and commitment to the profession in a sample of 1,290 school counselors in Florida. Seven constructs were selected for inclusion in this study: appropriate duties, inappropriate duties, self-efficacy for appropriate duties, self-efficacy for inappropriate duties, supervision by district personnel, supervision by a peer, and stress. The three strongest relationships to career satisfaction were school counselors who reported engaging in appropriate duties and career satisfaction ( $r = .14$ ), performing inappropriate duties and career satisfaction ( $r = -.19$ ), and stress ( $r = -.30$ ). Although

statistically significant, the aforementioned correlations have little practical significance. Neither of the two efficacy variables was found to have a statistically significant relationship with career satisfaction.

Career commitment was defined by Baggerly and Osborn (2006) similarly to the way that other researchers have defined turnover intentions (e.g., Bauer, Erdogan, Linden & Wayne, 2006; Irving & Meyer, 1994). Specifically, career commitment was defined for the purposes of this study as school counselors' intent to continue their employment as defined by three categorical responses: intend to continue, quit/retire, undecided. The same seven variables explored in conjunction with job satisfaction also were considered in relation to career commitment. Multiple regression analysis revealed that the amount of variance accounted for was not practically significant: adjusted  $R^2 = .02$ , ( $F = 4.30$ ,  $p = .025$ ).

Rayle (2006) explored the relationships among the construct of mattering to others at work, job stress, and job satisfaction in a sample of 388 school counselors. Thirty-five percent of the variance in school counselors' job satisfaction was explained by job stress and mattering to others at work. Mattering did not mediate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. There were, however, significant differences among elementary, middle, and high school counselors' perception of mattering to their principal ( $F = 103.85$ ,  $df = 2, 385$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

Baggerly and Osborn (2006) and Rayle's (2006) research build upon DeMato and Curico's (2004) finding that there is room to improve the job satisfaction of school counselors. These researchers provided a foundation for identifying additional factors

that may contribute to the job satisfaction of school counselors. Further, based upon the results of Baggerly and Osborn's study, it appears that self-efficacy theory may not be a relevant theoretical framework to utilize in further investigations into school counselor career satisfaction or commitment. Given Rayle's finding that the relational construct of mattering is significantly related to job satisfaction ( $r = .44$ ) and that there are differences among school counselors' perception of how much they matter to principals, LMX theory may have relevance to school counselors.

#### *LMX Research on Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is the most frequently explored outcome among researchers using LMX as a theoretical foundation (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The relationship between member perception of relationship quality and job satisfaction is consistent across samples from a variety of organizational types and education levels of respondents. In a meta-analytic review of 33 research studies, a corrected correlation between members' perception of relationship quality and overall job satisfaction was found to be .50 (Gerstner & Day). Corrections were made to this correlation to adjust for unreliability of measurement instruments. The uncorrected correlation was .46. The correlation between member perception of relationship quality and job satisfactions was among the strongest relationship found in this meta-analysis.

Similar results have been found in more recent studies. Epitropaki and Martin (2005) found a .56 correlation between relationship quality and job satisfaction in a sample of 439 British manufacturing and service employees. Epitropaki and Martin used the LMX7 to measure relationship quality. Erdogan and Enders (2007) sampled 210

grocery store workers and found a .43 correlation between relationship quality and job satisfaction. Relationship quality was measured by a twelve item, multidimensional LMX scale developed by Linden and Maslyn.

#### *LMX Research on Turnover Intentions*

The relationship between member perception of relationship quality and turnover intentions also was assessed by Gerstner and Day (1997) in their meta-analysis. Eight studies included turnover intentions as an outcome of relationship quality. The corrected  $r$  was found to be -.31. Similarly, Bauer et al. (2006) found a relationship of -.37 between executives' perception of relationship quality with their superior and turnover intentions. Much like with job satisfaction, the relationship between member perception of relationship quality and turnover intentions appear to be consistent over time and across populations of employees.

#### *Summary and Research Design Implications*

Factors contributing to school counselors' job satisfaction and turnover intentions are largely unidentified. Substantial evidence is available to support the relevance of LMX theory for explaining variance in employee job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Gerstner & Day, 1997). School counselors' perception of relationship quality, therefore, grounded this investigation into the outcomes of job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Baggerly and Osborn (2006) and Rayle's (2006) research provide some evidence to support further investigation into constructs associated with the school counselor job duties and stress. These findings are consistent with the conceptual assertion made by Baker (2000) that role challenges affect school counselors' job satisfaction and choice to

remain in the profession. From this, program implementation discrepancy is hypothesized to affect school counselors' job satisfaction and turnover intentions in this study.

### *Practical Implications of Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions*

The rationale for including job satisfaction and turnover intentions in this study extends beyond the empirical support for including them in a study grounded in LMX theory (Gerstner & Day, 1997) and the gap that exists in school counseling literature (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Rayle, 2006). Researchers in other fields have identified practical reasons for attending to job satisfaction that may be relevant to school counselors and school communities. School counselors' intention to continue their employment at a particular school may have substantial implications for the principals.

The majority of research on job satisfaction has occurred outside the field of school counseling and the educational environment. Researchers have found that job satisfaction has positive implications for employees' physical and psychological well-being (Ducharme & Martin, 2002; Pugliesi, 1999). Job dissatisfaction is associated with stress (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Conolly & Myers, 2003; Kessler, 1990) and burnout (Kessler; Lobban, Husted, & Farewell, 1999; Martin & Schinke, 1998).

Additionally, job satisfaction also is related to performance. Bacharach, Bamberger, and Mitchell (1990) and Spector (1997) found positive relationships between job satisfaction and employee effectiveness. Brown, Hohenshil, and Brow (1988) indicated that job satisfaction is necessary for mental health professionals to provide high quality service to school children and to support the adults in the school community.



Further exploration into factors that might affect school counselors' job satisfaction is important because this construct may have implications not only for the individual school counselor but also for the students and school communities that they serve.

School counselors' intentions to continue their employment at their current school may be of growing interest to principals. Principals have a substantial role in staffing their schools. There is a shortage of school counselors that is anticipated to continue through 2014 (The Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). This shortage is due in part to more counselors retiring than graduating from master's level programs (The Bureau of Labor Statistics). It may be increasingly difficult to fill vacant school counseling positions, thus factors that affect school counselors' turnover intentions may have substantial practical implications for principals.

### Conclusion

The diverse history of the school counseling profession has simultaneously advanced best practice recommendations and contributed to the challenge of role definition for school counselors (Baker & Gerler, 2007; Shaw, 1973). The profession has reached a point where the ideal school counseling role has been defined (ASCA, 2005), yet not all school counselors are implementing the ASCA National Model. A step toward the goal of consistent implementation of the ASCA National Model is developing an understanding of how school counselors' can negotiate and advocate for their role in schools (Scarborough & Culbreth, in press).

Principals are key stakeholders in school counselors' efforts to influence change in their role (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Mustaine et al., 1996; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994).

LMX theory allows for the consideration of how the relationship and communication between a principal and school counselor who work together might affect a school counselor's role. Further, LMX theory allows for assessing potential outcomes of the role definition process as well, such as job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

Chapter I introduced the study, and Chapter II provided a comprehensive review of the literature germane to this study. In this chapter the design and methodology the full study is presented including a description of the participants, sampling strategy, procedures, research questions and hypotheses, instrumentation, analytic strategies accompanying each research question, and results of a pilot study

#### Participants and Sampling Strategy

The population of interest was licensed or credentialed school counselors in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Cluster sampling was used to secure a sample that is representative of the population of interest. School districts were the primary unit for the cluster sample. School counselors were the secondary unit. In cluster sampling, primary units are randomly selected and all secondary units within identified primary units comprise the sample (Thompson, 2002).

The database of school districts was accessed through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, South Carolina Department of Education, and Tennessee Department of Education. The districts were in alphabetical order. School districts selected for the pilot study were removed from the database. Then, a random number sequence generator was utilized to select the school districts that comprised the sampling frame. School districts were selected until the number of secondary units within

a state closely approximates one-third of the total sample size. All school counselors in randomly selected districts comprised the sample with one modification.

If a school counselor works at more than one school (i.e., a split position), he or she was not be invited to participate in this study. There may be systematic differences in school counselors' relationships and experiences that are a function of a holding a split-position, which may be a threat to the internal validity of this study. Although this modification departs from cluster sampling procedures, it maintains the integrity of a random and, therefore, generalizable sample.

#### Procedure

School counselor contact information is public access and is available on school building websites and some school district websites. Emails were sent to school counselors inviting their participation in this study. The email request sent to school counselors included a brief introduction of the study and a link to an online website where they can complete the instruments (See Appendix A).

The link included in the email invitations connected potential participants to a secure website designed for the purpose of data collection. The opening page of the website contained the informed consent form (Appendix B). Potential participants were prompted to indicate their consent by checking either an "I agree" or "I disagree" box. Checking the "I agree" box cued the website to open the first item page; whereas, checking the "I disagree" box cued the website to an alternate page thanking the respondents for considering participation in this study.

Three strategies were utilized to maximize participant response rate. First, the email invitation to participate indicated that participants may choose to be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble. Second, two follow up emails were sent to thank those who had chosen to participate in this study and to remind non-respondents that they may still choose to complete the survey. These email reminders were sent at a one and two week interval following the initial invitation. Third, a progress bar was visible at the bottom of each page of the online survey illustrating the percentage of items completed.

### *Sample Size*

The planned sample size was guided by the data analytic strategy associated with the first research question introduced in Chapter I. Research question one, testing the fit of a hypothesized model, is the primary goal of this proposed study. The target number of participants, 150, was set based upon a recommendation of *medium* sized sample for SEM analysis (Kline, 2005) and number of free parameters in the hypothesized model. Kline's recommendation was guided by reviews of SEM literature that indicate that the majority of SEM samples are *medium* in size or between 100 and 200 participants.

The pilot study response rate informed the full study sampling frame. Initially the sample size was 714 school counselors from twenty-four school districts. A leader from one school district contacted the researcher and indicated that the school counselors employed in their district had been instructed not to respond to the survey until district approval was granted to conduct research. This district comprised 77 school counselors. Due to the length of time required to garner district approval (a minimum of a few

weeks), the district was removed from the sample as it was not school counselors' individual decisions to participate. Thus, the sample and response rate is described without the aforementioned district.

Twenty-three school districts comprised the sample. All school counselors listed on individual school building websites as employed in each of these districts were invited to participate in the study. Thus, a random sample of 637 school counselors, employed in three southeast states, were invited to participate in this study. Invitations were sent electronically, via email, to school counselors. Fifty-seven of the emails were returned as undeliverable or flagged as spam. As such, the sampling frame consisted of 580 school counselors. Twenty-two (3.79%) of the potential participants began the survey but did not finish. Ten (1.72%) of the respondents did not meet the eligibility requirement of being licensed or credentialed as school counselors. The usable response rate was 32.41% ( $n = 188$ ).

#### *Description of the Respondents*

Of the 188 school counselors whose responses were included in the data analysis, 85.64% ( $n = 161$ ) were female and 14.36% ( $n = 27$ ) were male. The majority respondents described themselves as Caucasian (84.57%,  $n = 159$ ); 13.29% ( $n = 25$ ) described themselves as African America/Black. One respondent (0.53%) each endorsed the Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino/a, and Multiethnic/Multiracial categories. Participants ranged in age from 23 years to 73 years ( $M = 42.74$ ,  $SD = 11.62$ ). Participants reported working at the elementary school level ( $n = 80$ , 42.55%), middle/jr. high level ( $n = 48$ , 25.53%), high school level ( $n = 50$ , 26.60%), K-12 setting ( $n = 4$ ,

2.10%), and other ( $n = 6$ , 3.19%). Respondents who endorsed “other” for level indicated that they either worked at a K-8 school or a K-2 primary school. One hundred forty-four (78.78%) of respondents described the geographic location of their school as urban or suburban, whereas, 36 (20.21%) endorsed the rural description of school location. Complete demographic data for the current sample are included in Table 1.

Table 1.

*Demographic Information for Participant in Current Study*

|  | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Range</i> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|-----------|--------------|
| <b>Sex</b>   |          |          |          |           |              |
| Female   | 161      | 85.60    |          |           |              |
| Male   | 27       | 14.40    |          |           |              |
| <b>Race/ethnicity</b>                                      |          |          |          |           |              |
| Asian American / Pacific Islander                          | 1        | 0.53     |          |           |              |
| American Indian  | 0        | 0        |          |           |              |
| African American / Black                                   | 25       | 13.29    |          |           |              |
| Caucasian / White  | 159      | 84.57    |          |           |              |
| Hispanic / Latino/a  | 1        | 0.53     |          |           |              |
| Multiracial / Multiethnic                                  | 1        | 0.53     |          |           |              |
| Other  | 0        | 0        |          |           |              |
| <b>Age</b>   |          |          |          |           |              |
|  |          |          | 42.74    | 11.62     | 23-73        |
| <b>Years of experience</b>                                 |          |          |          |           |              |
|  |          |          | 10.70    | 9.08      | 0-39         |
| <b>Size of caseload</b>                                    |          |          |          |           |              |
|  |          |          | 41.69    | 207.41    | 10-1100      |
| <b>Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch</b> |          |          |          |           |              |
|  |          |          | 45.47    | 23.53     | 3-99         |
| <b>School level</b>  |          |          |          |           |              |
| Elementary   | 80       | 42.55    |          |           |              |
| Middle/Junior High   | 48       | 25.53    |          |           |              |
| High School  | 50       | 26.60    |          |           |              |
| K-12   | 4        | 2.13     |          |           |              |
| Other  | 6        | 3.19     |          |           |              |
| <b>School location</b>                                     |          |          |          |           |              |
| Urban/Suburban   | 150      | 78.78    |          |           |              |
| Rural  | 38       | 20.21    |          |           |              |

*Note.* *N* = 188 for sex, school level, and school location. *N* = 187 for race/ethnicity and years of experience. *N* = 186 for age. *N* = 185 for caseload. *N* = 177 for free/reduced lunch.



## Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this study consisted of seven research instruments or sets of items used in previous research and a demographic questionnaire. The total number of items in this study was 90.

### *Leader-member Exchange Seven – Member Version (Appendix C)*

The LMX7 is a seven item measure of the “trust, respect, and mutual obligation that generates influence between parties” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 224). The LMX7 was used to assess a school counselor’s perceptions of her or his principal’s contribution to their relationship. Respondents answered based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly agree.” The aforementioned Likert scale reflects a minor adjustment made by Paglis and Green (2002) to the original LMX(m) scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien). The purpose of the Likert scale revision was to implement consistent anchor points throughout the measure. Some items on the original scale was accompanied by a frequency rating Likert scale (1 = rarely to 5 = very often) and other items had an agreement rating Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Paglis and Green found the Cronbach’s alpha for the LMX7(m) to be .92. The reliability estimate found by Paglis and Green is consistent with the reliability estimates associated with previous iterations of the LMX7(m) instrument (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Factor analysis indicates that the measure is unidimensional (Paglis & Green).

The LMX7 scale is frequently utilized in organizational settings and utilizes the language of “supervisor” and “employee” to reference members of the dyad. For this study, “employee” was replaced with “school counselor.” This modification reflects

language that may be more typical in a school environment. The LMX7 instrument used in the pilot study reflected these modifications, and the reliability estimate found in the pilot study ( $\alpha = .92$ ) was consistent with the estimate from Paglis and Green's (2002) study.

#### *School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire (Appendix D)*

The purpose of the *School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire* (Clemens, 2007b) is to measure school counselors' use of advocacy skills. Because such an assessment does not exist currently, the researcher created a measure to be tested in the pilot study for possible inclusion in the full study. The items were developed based upon the six advocacy skill sets delineated by Trusty and Brown (2005). For example, the items that reflect Trusty and Brown's *communication skill* set are "this school counselor listens to my perspective on her or his role," and "this school counselor effectively communicates her or his perception of challenges to her or his role." Respondents were prompted to indicate their agreement that the school counselor uses a particular advocacy skill on a four-point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The initial draft of the measure, used in the pilot study, consisted of eleven items.

The version of this questionnaire used in the pilot study was designed to measure principals' perceptions of school counselors' use of advocacy skills (Appendix P). The reliability for this instrument was found to be .94. A principal component analysis revealed that the principal version of this measure is unidimensional. Due to procedural changes in this study (see pilot study section), this measure was revised to a self-report measure so that school counselors could report their use of advocacy skills.

### *Principals' Decision Sharing Item Set (Appendix E)*

The informing, consulting, and delegating behaviors that principals may engage in are described by seven school counselor report items that represent the construct of *decision sharing*. This item set, used in previous research (Paglis & Green, 2002), was drawn from the Managerial Practice Survey (MPS; Yukl, Wall, & Lepsinger, 1990). Permission was granted by the lead author of the MPS to utilize these seven items in this proposed study and to reprint the items in the dissertation appendix (Yukl, personal communication, July 27, 2007; see Appendix K).

The content validity of the item set was established through four studies where students in MBA and organizational psychology programs were asked to classify items into one of thirteen behavioral categories. Each item was classified within the construct of interest (i.e., informing, consulting, and delegating) between 82 and 96 percent of the time (Yukl, et al., 1990). Paglis and Green (2002) found, however, that supervisees did not discriminate between supervisor informing, consulting, and delegating behaviors and thus labeled these items as a unidimensional construct, *decision sharing*. Yukl (personal communication, July 27, 2007) indicated that the informing behaviors overlap consulting and delegating behaviors in practice. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the seven items has been reported as .92 (Paglis & Green). The reliability coefficient found in the pilot study was Cronbach's alpha = .86.

### *The School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (Appendix F)*

The School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (SCPIS; Elsner & Carey, n.d.) is a 20 item measure of the degree to which a school has implemented a

comprehensive school counseling program. For example, one item reads: “a written mission statement exists and is used as a foundation by all school counselors.” School counselors were prompted to respond on a four point Likert scale ranging from “not implemented” to “fully implemented” as a descriptor of the degree to which each aspect of a comprehensive school counseling program is implemented in their school. In the SCPIS, item number fifteen, “School counselors use computer software to:” has three prompts: (a) “access student data,” (b) “analyze student data,” and (c) “use data for school improvement.” Participants are prompted to respond to each part. For the purposes of this study, item fifteen was separated into three separate items worded similarly as, “School counselors use computer software to access student data.” Thus, instead of the original 18 items, there were a total of 20 items for this administration of the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.

The SCPIS was developed by researchers at the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research. Carey (personal communication, July 5, 2007) indicated that the following steps were taken to develop the instrument. The items were written based upon on a literature review aimed at identifying characteristics of fully implemented comprehensive developmental counseling programs. After an initial item pool was developed, feedback was solicited from five district guidance directors to assess clarity of directions and to revise the items. Next, the survey was field tested with a convenience sample of 60 guidance directors. Items were eliminated based upon low item to scale correlation. Carey indicated that specific psychometric properties are not available.

Reliability estimates were calculated during the pilot study associated with this dissertation study, and the Cronbach's alpha for this scale was found to be .91

A companion scale was added to the SCPIS to assess school counselors' perceived importance of implementing each aspect of a comprehensive school counseling program. Each item will be followed by the question "how important is it to you to implement item X in your school?" Responses will be anchored as "not important = 1 to very important = 4." The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient found in the pilot study was .88.

A discrepancy score was calculated to describe the difference between degree of implementation and how important it is to a school counselor to implement each item. The discrepancy score is the sum of the absolute values of the difference between degree of implementation and perceived importance responses on each item. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the discrepancy score in the pilot study was .89.

#### *School Counseling Activities Discrepancy Scale (Appendix G)*

The *School Counseling Activities Discrepancy Scale* (SCADS; Clemens, 2007a) is a 20-item measure developed to assess the discrepancy between how school counselors currently spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time in implementing their school counseling programs. Although a scale (i.e., the School Counseling Activities Rating Scale [SCARS]; Scarborough, 2005), exists to measure such a discrepancy, the need to align data with the ASCA National Model and the desire for a more concise measure warranted developing a new instrument. The SCARS was developed through a work behavior analysis that was conducted prior to the publication

of the ASCA National Model (Scarborough, 2002) and reflects a conceptualization of the school counselor role that is guided by four primary interventions: counseling, consultation, curriculum, and coordination (Scarborough, 2005). To be consistent with current school counseling best practice recommendations, an instrument that measures the activity discrepancy between real and ideal needs to be aligned with the ASCA National Model's four delivery systems. Further, the SCARS is a 38-item measure that allows for gathering data that describes how school counselors currently spend time and how they would prefer to spend time in seven areas, or factors. For the purposes of this study, only one factor or a total activities discrepancy score is needed. Developing a new scale was driven by aligning the data with the ASCA National Model and reducing the number of items to only those needed to measure one factor reliably.

The SCADS was developed using the SCARS as a template, with permission from the author (Scarborough, personal communication, August 14, 2007; Appendix L). More specifically, the SCADS utilizes similar directions and an identical verbal frequency scale to the SCARS. School counselor respondents were prompted to indicate how often they perform specific activities and how often they would prefer to perform those activities. Respondents indicated on a 5-point verbal frequency scale from "1-never do this [activity]" to "5-routinely do this [activity]" as well as "1-I would prefer never to do this [activity]" to "5-I would prefer to routinely do this [activity]" (Scarborough, 2005, p. 276). A discrepancy score was calculated to describe the difference between actual and preferred practice. The discrepancy score is the sum of the absolute values of the difference between actual and preferred responses on each item.

The SCADS differs from the SCARS in that the activities that serve as items are drawn from the four delivery systems outlined in the ASCA National Model. The four part delivery system describes the activities that school counselors engage in to implement their school counseling programs (ASCA, 2005). Thirty-three activities are explicitly referenced by ASCA as part of a delivery system. The initial item pool consisted of all 33 activities specifically described as being a part of the ASCA National Model delivery systems. A focus group of practicing school counselors was used during phase one of the pilot study to reduce the number of items to approximately half for the full study. Twenty items were field tested in phase two of the pilot study. This process is described in more detail in the discussion of the pilot study section of this study. The Cronbach's alpha found in phase two of the pilot study for the discrepancy score was .80.

*Job Satisfaction Item Set (Appendix H)*

Job satisfaction will be measured by ten items. Nine of these items were used in previous research to assess school counselors' job satisfaction (Rayle, 2006). One item was added to the set by the researcher. The original items were developed by Rayle based upon a review of job satisfaction and school counseling literature. As they did in Rayle's study, respondents will be prompted to indicate their agreement with items on a four-point Likert Scale. A modification to the scale is that respondents also will be provided with the option to indicate that an item is not applicable to them. The item added to Rayle's original item set is "How satisfied are you with your working relationships with school counselors at the school where you are a school counselor?" The not applicable response option was added because not all school counselors work in buildings with other

school counselors. Items respondents deem to be not applicable will not factor into the mean score used in data analysis. Rayle found the Cronbach's alpha for the nine item set to be .93 for elementary school counselors, .89 for middle school counselors, and .89 for high school counselors. The Cronbach's alpha for Rayle's full sample was .86. The Cronbach's alpha found in the pilot study for this dissertation study was .82. The reliability estimate from the pilot study is based upon the respondents who answered all ten items and did not indicate that any of the items were not applicable to them.

The following minor modifications were made to Rayle's item set. The prompts were reworded from "Are you currently satisfied...." to "How satisfied are you..." to match the Likert-type response options. Items three and four were reworded to parallel items one and two in the set. For example, item three, "...satisfied are you with your student working relationships..." was revised to "...satisfied are you with your working relationships with students..."

#### *Turnover Intentions Item Set (Appendix I)*

Turnover intentions will be measured by two items used in previous research to assess the likelihood that an employee will leave an organization within the next year (Irving & Meyer, 1994). School counselors will be asked "How likely is it that you will look for work outside your [school] in the next year?" and "How likely is it that you will leave your [school] within the next year?" based upon a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = extremely unlikely to 7 = extremely likely. Irving and Meyer found Cronbach alphas ranging from .95 to .97. The Cronbach's alpha found in the pilot study was .79.



### *Demographic Questionnaire (Appendices J)*

The purpose of the demographic questionnaire is to describe the participants and collect data for use in analyses. The questionnaire consists of nine items. Specifically, the questionnaire asked about respondents' age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience, school level, when they last completed a graduate-level school counseling course and attended a school counseling conference, and the frequency with which they read ASCA publications.

### *Program Implementation Discrepancy*

The variable of program implementation discrepancy was measured by the school counselor report discrepancy scores on the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey and the School Counseling Activities Discrepancy Scale. Absolute value discrepancy scores were used because together, the measures offered insight into larger program discrepancies and the day-to-day role discrepancies that may exist. These two scales contribute equally to the measurement of program implementation discrepancy. Treating these two scales as a unidimensional measure was supported statistically by the results of a principal components analysis conducted during phase two of the pilot study. Further, when used in combination, the pilot study reliability of program implementation discrepancy was found to be  $\alpha = .93$ .

### *Research Questions and Analytic Strategies*

The analytic strategies used to answer the research questions for this study consisted of descriptive analyses and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for all instruments, path analysis, exploratory factor analysis, multiple regression, and

Pearson's-product moment correlation. LISREL (student version 8.80, 2006) was used for the path analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 16.0, 2007) will be used for all other analysis. Figure 2 depicts the hypothesized model. The research questions, hypotheses, respondents, variables, instruments, number of items, range of responses, and data analytic strategies associated with testing the hypothesized model are provided in Table 2.

The majority of the data are ordinal (i.e., response sets of ordered categories). As such, the analysis of the research questions must employ techniques that do not assume that these ordinal data have metric properties (Joreskog, 2005). The appropriate estimation method for path analysis is weighted least squares (Kline, 2005).

Figure 2.

*Path Diagram of Hypothesized Model.*

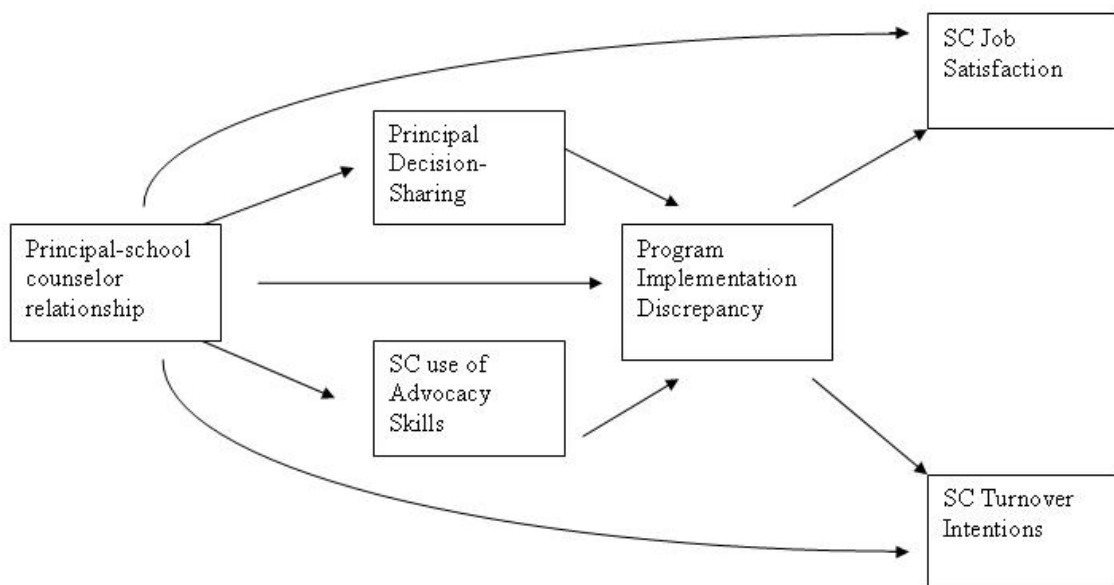


Table 2.

*Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Analytic Strategies.*

| <b>RQ1:</b> How well do the relationships expressed in the hypothesized model fit the data?  |   |                   |                      |                                  |                   |
|--|---|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Hypothesis 1:</b> The Chi Square fit statistic will be non-significant. Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) will not exceed .08, or a reasonable fit with the data.  |   |                   |                      |                                  |                   |
| <b>RQ1A:</b> What is the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship and the mediating impacts of principal decision sharing and school counselor's use of advocacy skills on program implementation discrepancy?   |   |                   |                      |                                  |                   |
| <b>Hypothesis 1A:</b> There will be negative direct effects estimates and mediating impacts on program implementation discrepancy.   |   |                   |                      |                                  |                   |
| <b>RQ1B.</b> What is the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship as compared with the mediating impact of program implementation discrepancy on job satisfaction and turnover intentions?   |   |                   |                      |                                  |                   |
| <b>Hypothesis 1B:</b> Principal-school counselor relationship will have a positive direct effect estimate on job satisfaction and a negative direct effect estimate on turnover intentions. Program implementation discrepancy will have a negative mediating effect estimates on job satisfaction and a positive mediating impact on turnover intentions. |   |                   |                      |                                  |                   |
| Variables  | Instruments   | Number of Items   | Response Range       | Cronbach's Alpha (pilot)         | Analytic Strategy |
| Principal-School Counselor Relationship  | Leader Member Exchange Seven  | 7 items           | 5-point Likert Scale | $\alpha = .92$                   | Path Analysis     |
| Principal Decision Sharing   | Decision Sharing Item Set   | 7-items           | 5-point Likert Scale | $\alpha = .86$                   |                   |
| School counselors' use of Advocacy Skills  | School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire                               | 11                | 4-point Likert Scale | $\alpha = .94$                   |                   |
| Program Implementation Discrepancy   | Two Scales (see below)  |                   |                      | $\alpha = .93$ (scales combined) |                   |
|  | School Counseling Program Implementation Survey and Importance scale. | 20 (2 part) items | 4-point Likert Scale | $\alpha = .89$                   |                   |
|  | School Counseling Activities Discrepancy Scale                        | 20 (2 part) items | 5-point Likert Scale | $\alpha = .80$                   |                   |
| Job Satisfaction   | Job Satisfaction Item Set   | 10 items          | 4-point Likert Scale | $\alpha = .82$                   |                   |
| Turnover Intentions  | Turnover Intentions Item  | 2-items           | 7-point Likert Scale | $\alpha = .79$                   |                   |

|   |  |                        |                       |   |                             |
|---|--|------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>RQ2:</b> What is the factor structure of the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey?  |  |                        |                       |   |                             |
| <b>Hypothesis:</b> Exploratory  |  |                        |                       |   |                             |
| <b>Variables</b>  | <b>Instruments</b>   | <b>Number of Items</b> | <b>Response Range</b> | <b>Cronbach's Alpha (pilot)</b>   | <b>Analytic Strategy</b>    |
| TBD   | School Counseling Program Implementation Survey                  | 20 (2 part)            | 4-point Likert Scale  | $\alpha = .91$ (implemented)<br>$\alpha = .88$ (importance)<br>$\alpha = .89$ (discrepancy) | Exploratory Factor Analysis |
| <b>RQ3:</b> To what degree do school counselors perceive that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important?  |  |                        |                       |   |                             |
| <b>Hypothesis:</b> The mean response will be within the range of “somewhat important” to “important” (i.e., range 2.00 – 3.00)  |  |                        |                       |   |                             |
| <b>Variables</b>  | <b>Instruments</b>   | <b>Number of Items</b> | <b>Response Range</b> | <b>Cronbach's Alpha (pilot)</b>   | <b>Analytic Strategy</b>    |
| To be determined by factor structure (see RQ2)  | School Counseling Program Implementation Survey Importance Scale | 20                     | 4-point Likert Scale  | $\alpha = .88$  | Descriptive Statistics      |
| <b>RQ4:</b> What is the effect of how recently school counselors attended a school counseling conference, completed a graduate-level school counseling course, and how frequently they read ASCA publications on their perceptions of the importance of comprehensive school counseling programs?   |  |                        |                       |   |                             |
| <b>Hypothesis:</b> The year in which school counselors most recently attended a school counseling conference, year of most recent completion of a graduate-level school counseling course, frequency of reading ASCA publications will have a medium effect (i.e., adjusted $R^2 \geq .06$ , Sink & Stroh, 2006) on perceived importance of comprehensive school counseling programs. All relationships will be positive. |  |                        |                       |   |                             |
| <b>Variables</b>  | <b>Instruments</b>   | <b>Number of Items</b> | <b>Response Range</b> | <b>Cronbach's Alpha (pilot)</b>   | <b>Analytic Strategy</b>    |
| Years since SC course (IV)  | Demographic Questionnaire  | 1                      | Open                  | N/A   | Multiple Regression         |
| Years since SC conference (IV)  | Demographic Questionnaire  | 1                      | Open                  | N/A   |                             |
| Number of ASCA published articles read in the last 2 months (IV)  | Demographic Questionnaire  | 1                      | Open                  | N/A   |                             |
| Importance of implementing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program (DV)   | School Counseling Program Implementation Survey Importance Scale | 20                     | 4-point Likert Scale  | $\alpha = .88$  |                             |

## Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted in two phases, both of which began after Institutional Review Board approval was secured. The purpose of phase one was instrument development and consisted of two focus groups. Phase two of the pilot study consisted of a random sample of dyads of principals and school counselors. The purpose of phase two of the pilot study was to evaluate the feasibility of the proposed procedures, further develop the instrumentation, and assess the dimensionality of a hypothesized latent variable.

Procedures for the pilot study differed substantially from the procedures outlined for the proposed full study. These differences are due primarily to the low response rate found in phase two of the pilot study and the subsequent decision to shift the population from dyads of principals and school counselors (pilot study) to school counselors (full study). As a result of this population shift, some aspects of the instrumentation development that occurred during phase one of the pilot study are no longer relevant to the full study.

### Pilot Study: Phase One

Three instruments, the School Counseling Activities Discrepancy Scale (Clemens, 2007a), the School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007b), and the Role Perceptions Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007c), are researcher developed. Crocker and Algina (1986) recommended a ten step process to construct and test a valid instrument. Specifically, the authors addressed the need to (1) identify the primary purpose of the instrument, (2) identify behaviors to represent the construct, (3) prepare a set of test

specifications, (4) construct an initial item pool, (5) review and revise items, (6) hold preliminary item tryouts, (7) field-test the items, (8) determine statistical properties of items, (9) conduct reliability and validity studies, and (10) develop guidelines for administration, scoring, and interpretation. Steps one through four are described in the instrumentation section of chapter three. Phase one of the pilot study addressed step five: review and revise the items.

#### *School Counseling Activities Discrepancy Scale*

The initial draft of the School Counseling Activities Discrepancy Scale (Clemens, 2007a) consisted of 33 items. Phase one of the pilot study served the purpose of reducing the number of items while accurately representing each of the ASCA National Model delivery systems. This item reduction process occurred through an online, interactive focus group of twelve practicing school counselors. The focus group was conducted in a UMOO classroom. UMOO is an online classroom environment that allowed for synchronous discussion, viewing of PowerPoint slides, and transcription of the discussion. All participating school counselors were familiar with UMOO technology. The school counselors reported a median of seven years of school counseling experience with a range of four years to twenty-two years of experience. Five school counselors reported practicing at the elementary school level, three at the middle school level, and three at the high school level. The prompts used to guide the focus group are included in Appendix M.

Based upon feedback from the focus group the initial item set was reduced to 20 items. Nine items were eliminated and six items were combined into two items. The

decision to remove an item from the instrument was guided by consensus from the focus group that the item was (a) not necessary to represent accurately the delivery system when considering the other items associated with the delivery system or (b) confusing. For example, focus group participants indicated that they found it difficult to differentiate between “conduct small group activities outside the classroom” which, according to the ASCA National Model (2005), falls in the classroom guidance delivery system, and “provide small group counseling,” which is associated with the responsive services delivery system. Because the focus group felt like the item “provide small group counseling” is essential to describing responsive services, the classroom guidance item “conduct small group activities outside the classroom” was removed from the item set. The specific changes to the instrumentation and item set used in phase two of the pilot study are delineated in Appendix N.

#### *School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire*

The initial draft of the School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007b) consisted of 11 items. A focus group of ten educational leadership graduate students and one educational leadership faculty member reviewed these items in conjunction with the advocacy skill sets delineated by Trusty and Brown (2005). Students participating in the focus group reported a mean of six years of public school experience as an administrator or teacher. The prompts that guided the focus group discussion are available in Appendix O. Feedback from this focus group resulted in the minor modifications to the instructions and the response format of the School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire as delineated in Appendix P. Also, the focus group participants

were asked to identify in writing which skill, as defined by Trusty and Brown, the item measured or to indicate if an item did not appear to be measuring one of the skills. Some participants matched each item to the skill it best represents, while others matched the item to all the skills it could possibly represent. From this, it was not possible to discern clearly how participants viewed the content validity of the items. No participants, however, indicated that any of the items did not fit with at least one of the advocacy skills.

The School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007b) initially was designed to be completed by principals about the school counselors with whom they work. Because principals will not be included in the full study, the measure was adapted post pilot study to serve as a school counselor self-report measure of their advocacy skills in the full study (Appendix D).

#### *Role Perceptions Questionnaire*

The Role Perceptions Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007c) was designed for inclusion in the full study. Scoring the questionnaire is dependent, however, on matching responses of principals and school counselors who work together. Given the shift in population from principal-school counselor dyads to individual school counselors, this questionnaire is no longer relevant to the full study.

The focus group prompts are available in Appendix Q and the results of the focus group are described below. The initial draft of the Role Perceptions Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007c) consisted of five items. The same educational leadership focus group described in the previous section reviewed this instrument as well. Feedback from this



focus group resulted in minor modifications to instructions and response format as delineated in Appendix R. No changes were made to the items.

#### Pilot Study: Phase Two

Phase Two of the pilot study consisted of a random sample of dyads of principals and school counselors. The purpose of phase two of the pilot study was to evaluate the procedures, further develop the instrumentation, and test the dimensionality of a hypothesized latent variable. In the following section, procedures used in the pilot study are described, results of the pilot presented, and procedural changes for the full study discussed.

#### *Participants and Sampling Strategy*

The populations of interest were licensed or credentialed school counselors in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Cluster sampling was used to secure a sample that is representative of the population of interest. School districts were the primary unit for the cluster sample. School counselors were the secondary unit. In cluster sampling, primary units are randomly selected and all secondary units within identified primary units comprise the sample (Thompson, 2002).

The databases of school districts were accessed through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, South Carolina Department of Education, and Tennessee Department of Education. The districts were in alphabetical order. A random number sequence generator was utilized to select the school districts that comprised the sampling frame. School districts were selected until the number of secondary units within a state closely approximated 200. The number of secondary units was arrived at based on

the desire to estimate the response rate for the full study, evaluate the instrumentation, and assess the dimensionality of some constructs. All school counselors in randomly selected districts comprised the sample with two modifications.

If there were more than two school counselors within a school, then two school counselors were randomly selected from the school for participation. The reason for limiting the number of school counselors per school was that principals were asked to complete the same measures for each sampled school counselor with whom they work. The modification to the cluster sampling strategy was employed to respect the principals' time and potentially increase the response rate.

If a school counselor worked at more than one school (i.e., a split position), he or she was not invited to participate in this study. There may be systematic differences in school counselors' relationships and experiences that are a function of holding a split-position, which may be a threat to the internal validity of this study. Although these two modifications departed from cluster sampling procedures, they maintained the integrity of a random and, therefore, generalizable sample.

Contact information for principals was obtained through public access databases that are published by each state's department of public instruction. School counselor contact information is also public access and located on school building websites and some school district websites.

Emails were sent separately to principals and school counselors inviting their participation in this study. The email request sent to principals included a brief introduction of the study, list of school counselors employed in their school who also

were invited to participate in this study, and a link to an online website where they completed the instruments (Appendix T). Similarly, school counselors' email invitations included a brief introduction to the study, the name of the principal invited to participate in the study, and a link to the online website (Appendix U).

The purpose of including the names of the co-workers also invited to participate in this study was to (a) facilitate matching of the dyads and (b) clarify for participants the dyadic nature of this investigation. The following strategies were used to match dyads of principals and school counselors for data analysis purposes while maintaining the confidentiality of participant responses. Two questions were used to narrow the dyadic matching to the school level: "What are the first three digits of your school's main office telephone number not including the area code? For example if the school's office telephone number is 828-254-6345, you would enter "254." and "What is the street address number for the school? For example if the street address for the school is 360 School Road, you would enter "360." These questions were designed to draw upon information that is common knowledge to principals and school counselors and to match respondents (i.e., principals and counselors who work in the same building) without identifying the school unit.

School counselor initials were used to match dyads within a school. Principals were prompted to enter a school counselor's initials prior to completing each set of measures. School counselors also were asked to enter their initials for the purpose of matching dyads prior to completing the demographic questionnaire. The use of initials served as a means of matching dyads as well as providing a reference point for principals

about to whom they are responding. This information was used only to match counselor-principal dyads. Because the school data requested (three digits of the phone number and the street number) were not matched to a specific school by the researcher, the use of school counselor initials did not compromise the confidentiality of participant responses.

The link included in the email invitations connected potential participants to a secure website designed for the purpose of data collection. The opening page of the website contained the informed consent form (Appendix V). Potential participants were prompted to indicate their consent by checking either an “I agree” or “I disagree” box. Checking the “I agree” box cued the website to open the first item page, whereas checking the “I disagree” box cued the website to an alternate page thanking the respondents for considering participation in this study.

Three strategies were utilized to maximize participant response rate. First, the email invitation to participate indicated that participants could choose to be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble. Second, one follow up email was sent to thank those who have chosen to participate in this study and to remind non-respondents that they may still choose to complete the survey. Third, a progress bar was visible at the top of each page of the online survey illustrating the percentage of items completed.

#### *Pilot Study Instrumentation*

As a result of the change from dyadic research to focusing only on school counselors, three measures used in the pilot study, the principal demographic questionnaire, and two open-ended questions will not be included in the full study. One

measure, *School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire* (Clemens, 2007b), was revised for inclusion in the full study (Appendix D). These instruments are described in the following section.

The *Leader-member exchange seven – leader version* (LMX7(l); Paglis & Green, 2002; Appendix W) is a seven-item measure of the “trust, respect, and mutual obligation that generates influence between parties” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 224). The leader version was used to assess a principal’s perception of a school counselor’s contribution to the relationship. Respondents answer based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly agree.” Higher mean scores on the LMX7 measure indicate higher levels of relationship quality. Paglis and Green found the Cronbach’s alpha for the LMX7 to be .88. Factor analysis revealed that the measure is unidimensional (Paglis & Green).

The LMX7 scale is frequently administered in organizational settings and uses the language of “supervisor” and “employee” to reference members of the dyad. For this study, “employee” was replaced with “school counselor.” This modification reflects language that may be more typical in a school environment. Permission to make the modification was granted by the lead author of the LMX7(l) scale (Paglis, personal communication, August 12, 2007; Appendix X).

The *Role Preferences Questionnaire* (Clemens, 2007c) is a five-item, researcher developed instrument, designed to assess principals’ understanding of their school counselor’s preference for how he or she administers a school counseling program. The ASCA National Model (2005) describes a four-part delivery system that represents broad

areas in which school counselors perform activities to implement their programs.

Researchers have found that school counselors also perform activities that are not tied to the ASCA National Model, such as monitoring attendance, disciplining students, and scheduling classes (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press). This questionnaire measures the degree to which principals accurately understand the amount of time a school counselor would like to spend in each of the four ASCA National Model delivery systems and on other duties compared to how much time he or she spends now.

The questionnaire consists of two versions. One version was administered to school counselors (Appendix Y) and a second version was administered to principals (Appendix Z). School counselors were asked to indicate how much time they would like to spend performing activities associated with each of the delivery systems as well as on “other duties” compared to how much time they spend currently. Respondents were prompted to respond on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = substantially less time” to “5 = substantially more time.” Principals were asked to estimate the amount of time a school counselor would like to spend in each of the four ASCA National Model delivery systems and on “other duties” compared to how much time he or she spends now on each area using the same Likert scale as the school counselor version.

The *Role Preferences Questionnaire* (Clemens, 2007c) is scored based upon the agreement between school counselor and principal report consistent with the scoring of a previous “effective communication” measure that was designed to assess outcomes of sent messages (Wiedemann & Kittler, 2006). If a principal and a school counselor report equivalently, then a “5” is entered. If there is a discrepancy of one Likert-type item

between a principal and school counselor's report then a "4" is entered. A "3" is entered for a two-point discrepancy. A "2" is entered for a three-point discrepancy. A "1" is entered for a four-point discrepancy.

The principal demographic questionnaire (Appendix AA) was designed to describe the participants and match dyads of principal and school counselor respondents. Respondents were asked about respondents age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience, and school level. School data questions described previously to match dyads also were included in this questionnaire.

Three open ended questions (Appendix AB) were administered to principals for the purpose of developing a more in-depth understanding of effective communication between school counselors and their principals about the school counseling role. Principals were asked "What are the most effective ways that school counselors have or could communicate with you about their role," "What has shaped your understanding of how school counselors want to spend their time," and "What would it take for you to support a significant change in how a school counselor spends her or his time?"

The *School Counselors' Use of Advocacy Skills* (Clemens, 2007b) was designed to be completed by principals about the school counselors' with whom they work (Appendix AC). The instrument has been revised (Appendix D) as a self-report measure so that school counselors may complete the instrument about their use of advocacy skills.

#### Pilot Study Phase Two: Results

The purpose of the phase two of the pilot study was evaluation of the procedures to determine if the pilot design was feasible for a full dissertation study, check the

reliability of all instruments that will be used in the full study, assess the dimensionality of the researcher developed scales and program implementation discrepancy variable, and run preliminary analysis associated with the research questions.

### *Results Related to Procedures*

In the development of the database to recruit participants, 18 school districts were randomly selected from three southeast states. Principals and school counselors from one of the school districts were not invited to participate in the study because the district and school building websites were under construction. Contact information of school counselors was, therefore, unavailable for that school district. The cluster sampling and modifications described previously were used to identify 194 dyads of principals and school counselors who worked together for potential participation in this study.

*School counselors.* Emails were sent to 194 school counselors. Seven percent ( $n = 14$ ) of the emails were returned as undeliverable. Fifty-one school counselors (26%) began the survey. The usable response rate, however, was 20% ( $n = 39$ ). The vast majority of this attrition occurred on the demographic page where school counselors were asked to provide information that could be used to match their responses to their principals' response. Of the 39 school counselors whose responses were included in the data analysis, 91% were female and 9% were male. Eighty-three percent of the respondents described themselves as Caucasian; 17% percent described themselves as African America/Black. No respondents endorsed other race/ethnicity categories. Participants ranged in age from 29 years to 64 years ( $M = 44.86$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ). Participants reported working at the elementary school level ( $n = 13$ , 33.3%), middle/jr. high level ( $n$



= 14, 35.9%), high school level ( $n = 6$ , 15.4%), K-12 setting ( $n = 2$ , 0.05%), and other ( $n = 4$ , 0.1%). Respondents who endorsed “other” for level indicated that they either worked at a K-8 school or a K-2 primary school.

*Principals.* Separate email invitations were sent to 143 principals. Six email messages (4%) were returned as undeliverable. Principals who worked with one school counselor ( $n = 92$ ) were directed toward a link to a survey with one full set of instrumentation. Fifty-one of the selected principals worked with two or more school counselors and their email invitation included a link to a survey with instrumentation for two school counselors. Seventeen of the 92 principals (18%) who worked with one school counselor began the survey. Six of the 51 principals (12%) who work with two or more school counselors began the survey. Similar to the school counselor respondents, some principals did not complete the survey sufficiently for their responses to be used in data analysis. The usable principal response rate, or the percentage of the 194 school counselors about whom a principal responded was  $n = 20$  or 10%. These responses were completed by  $n = 15$  principals.

Of the principals ( $n = 15$ ) whose responses were included in the data analysis, 67% were female and 37% were male. Ninety-five percent of the respondents described themselves as Caucasian. Five percent of respondents described themselves as African America/Black. No respondents endorsed other race/ethnicity categories. Participants ranged in age from 30 years to 62 years ( $M = 49.84$ ,  $SD = 9.48$ ). Participants reported working at the elementary school level ( $n = 6$ , 40%), middle/jr. high level ( $n = 3$ , 20%), high school level ( $n = 2$ , 13.3%), K-12 setting (0%), and other ( $n = 2$ , 13.3%).

Respondents who endorsed “other” for level indicated that they worked at a pre-K-8 school. Two respondents (13.3%) did not indicate a school level.

### *Instrument Reliability and Development*

This phase of the pilot study served as a means of field testing the items and initial assessments of psychometric properties (Crocker & Algina, 1986; steps seven and eight). Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimates were assessed for all instruments that will be used in the full study. Reliability estimates are included in the full study instrumentation section of this Chapter. All instrumentation reliability estimates were found to be within an acceptable range ( $\alpha = .79$  to  $.94$ ) for conducting research (Heppner et al., 1999). Further, exploration of the psychometric properties of the researcher designed instrument, School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007b), also occurred during the pilot study.

A principal components analysis was used to assess the dimensionality of this researcher designed School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire (Clemens, 2007b). The instrument was designed to be a unidimensional measure of the construct school counselors’ use of advocacy skills. Visual inspection of the scree plot (Figure 3) indicated a clear break after the first component. The majority of the variance (67.5%) was explained by one component. The loadings of the items on the first component range from  $.72$  to  $.90$  (Table 3). In tandem with the strong inter-item reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .94$ ), this result provided preliminary support for treating this construct as unidimensional.

Figure 3.

*Scree Plot of the School Counselor Advocacy Scale Principal Components.*

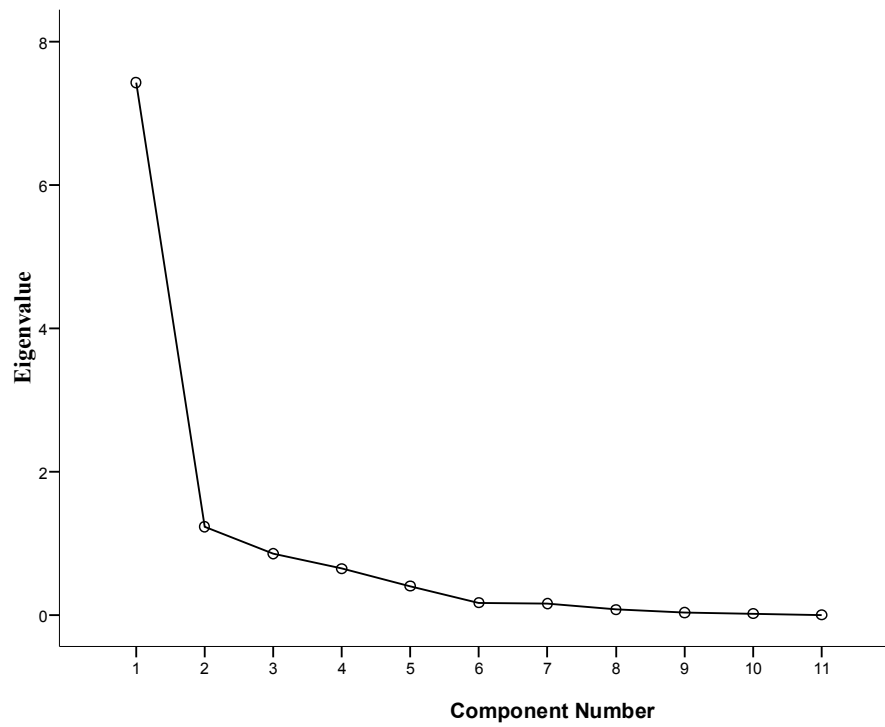


Table 3.

*Components Matrix of the School Counselor Advocacy Scale Item Loadings on Principal Components.*

| Item | Component |      |
|------|-----------|------|
|      | 1         | 2    |
| 1    | .78       | -.44 |
| 2    | .81       | -.42 |
| 3    | .86       | .01  |
| 4    | .85       | -.04 |
| 5    | .81       | -.29 |
| 6    | .90       | -.02 |
| 7    | .76       | .21  |
| 8    | .72       | .62  |
| 9    | .77       | .58  |
| 10   | .90       | -.09 |
| 11   | .90       | -.02 |

#### *Program Implementation Variable*

A principal components analysis was used to determine if the 20 discrepancy scores from the *School Counselor Activity Discrepancy Scale* (SCADS) and the 20 discrepancy scores from the *School Counseling Program Implementation Survey* (SCPIS) could be treated as a unidimensional measure of program implementation discrepancy. The correlation between the two discrepancy scales was high ( $r = .84$ ), despite measuring what are conceptually different aspects of program implementation. The SCADS measures the discrepancy between how much time on a day-to-day basis school counselors report spending on activities associated with the National model compared to how much time they would prefer to spend on these activities. The SCPIS assesses the discrepancy between the degree to which school counselors are implementing a comprehensive developmental counseling program and the degree to which they perceive

implementing such a program is important. The SCPIS focuses on broad program aspects such as a mission statement compared to day-to-day program aspects such as time spent on classroom guidance.

Due to the small sample size of the pilot study, the discrepancy scores from each of the scales were parceled into four groups per scale rather than entering each item separately in principal components analysis. The purpose of parceling the scores was to decrease the number of items entered into the principal components analysis. The parcels were constructed through random permutation of the items. The scree plot illustrated a clear break between components one and two (Figure 4). The first component explained 71.0% of the variance in the data. The parcel loadings ranged from .54 to .93 (Table 4). From this, it seems reasonable to treat these discrepancy scores as a unidimensional construct.

Figure 4.

*Scree Plot of the Program Implementation Discrepancy Principal Components.*

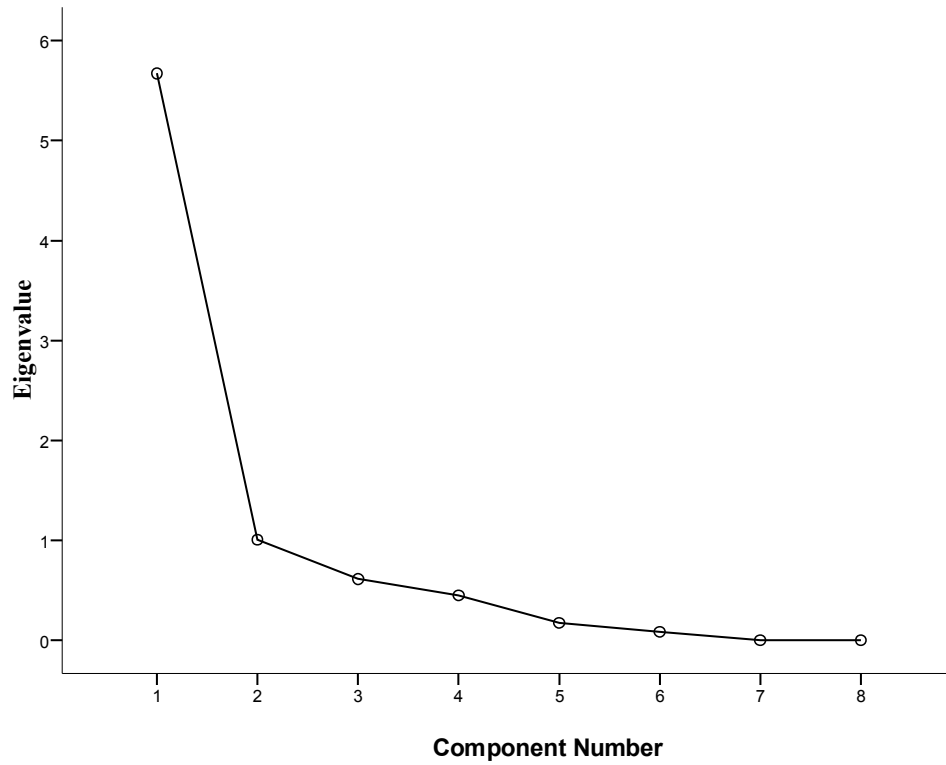


Table 4.

*Components Matrix of the SCADS and Comprehensive SCPIS Discrepancy Score Parcel Loadings on Principal Components.*

| Parcel | Component |      |
|--------|-----------|------|
|        | 1         | 2    |
| SCADS1 | .92       | .09  |
| SCADS2 | .83       | -.49 |
| SCADS3 | .54       | .67  |
| SCADS4 | .79       | -.06 |
| SCPIS1 | .92       | .09  |
| SCPIS2 | .83       | -.49 |
| SCPIS3 | .92       | .17  |
| SCPIS4 | .93       | .19  |

A principal components analysis allowed the researcher to determine that treating the SCADS and the SCPIS discrepancy scores as one variable in subsequent analysis is reasonable. The variable will be treated as an observed variable rather than a latent variable in the model because incorporating a measurement model does not add to the interpretation of path coefficients when the reliability of the measures is high (Kaplan, 2000). The observed variable, program implementation discrepancy, will be calculated by determining the mean of all items (40) on the SCADS and SCPIS. The reliability of these 40 items found in the pilot study was  $\alpha = .93$ .

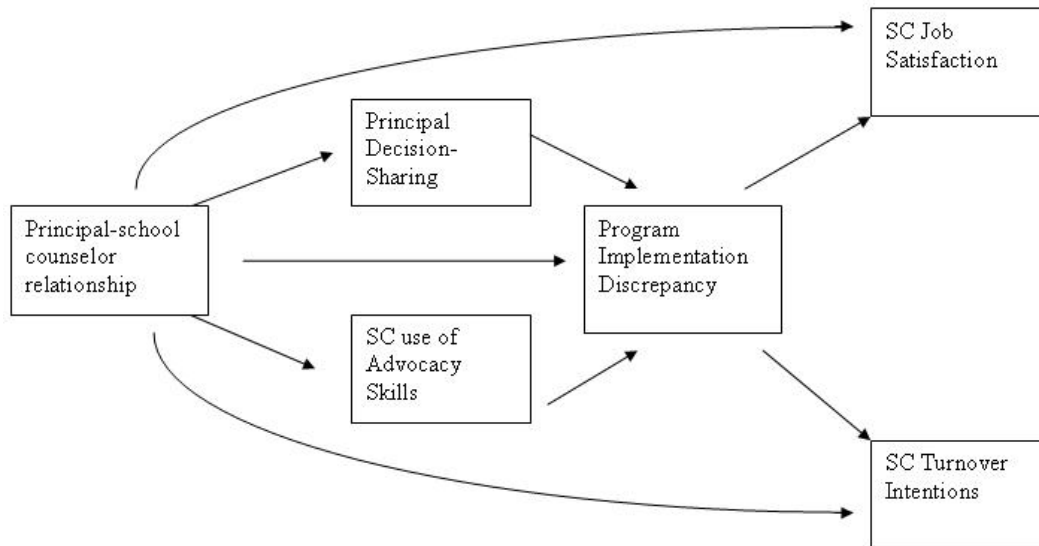
#### *Preliminary Analysis for Research Questions*

Descriptive statistics and correlation matrices were calculated for all variables that will be used to answer research questions in the full study. Further preliminary analysis also was conducted for research question four. The statistics are organized by research question. Brief discussion of the results is included as well.

**RQ1:** How well do the relationships expressed in the hypothesized model fit the data?

Figure 5.

*Path Diagram of Hypothesized Model.*



*Descriptive statistics.* In the Table 5 the descriptive statistics for the variables that will be used to test the hypothesized model are presented. Principal-school counselor relationship, decision sharing, program implementation discrepancy, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions are based on school counselor response ( $n = 38$ ). School counselors' use of advocacy skills is based on principal response ( $n = 20$ ).



Table 5.

*Descriptive Statistics for Variables Included in the Hypothesized Model.*

|                | Relationship | Decision<br>Sharing | Program<br>Implementation<br>Discrepancy | Job<br>Satisfaction | Turnover<br>Intentions | Advocacy<br>Skills |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Mean           | 4.27         | 4.02                | 0.50                                     | 3.53                | 1.94                   | 3.49               |
| Std. Deviation | 0.53         | 0.58                | 0.37                                     | 0.45                | 1.34                   | 0.47               |
| Skewness       | -0.32        | -0.29               | 0.23                                     | -1.61               | 1.31                   | -0.14              |
| Kurtosis       | -0.50        | 0.33                | 7.77                                     | 3.27                | 0.47                   | -1.76              |
| Range          | 2.00         | 2.57                | 1.88                                     | 1.80                | 4.00                   | 1.18               |

*Note.* Data associated with relationship, decision sharing, program implementation discrepancy, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions are based on school counselor report ( $n = 39$ ). School counselors' use of advocacy skills is based on principal report ( $n = 20$ ).

*Correlation Matrix.* The following correlation matrix (Table 6) illustrates the strength of the relationships found in the pilot study that are associated with the paths in the hypothesized model. Research question one, or testing the fit of the hypothesized model, is separated into three sub-questions and hypotheses. The strength of the relationships found in the pilot study are presented as they related to the sub-research questions and associated hypotheses.

**RQ1A:** What is the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship and the mediating impacts of principal decision sharing and school counselors' use of advocacy skills on program implementation discrepancy?

**Hypothesis 1A:** There will be a negative direct effect and mediating impacts on program implementation discrepancy.

A negative relationship was observed between principal-school counselor relationship and program implementation discrepancy ( $r = -.32$ ,  $p = .11$ ). There is a positive relationship between principal-school counselor relationship and decision

sharing ( $r = .77, p < .01$ ) and a negative relationship between decision sharing and program implementation discrepancy ( $r = -.40, p = .04$ ). School counselors' use of advocacy skills was not included in the correlation matrix due to low principal response and the inability to match a substantive number of principal responses to school counselor responses. From this, there is some preliminary support that principal-school counselor relationship will directly impact program implementation discrepancy but that more of the variance in program discrepancy will be explained by the mediating effect of decision sharing.

**RQ1B:** What is the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship as compared with the mediating impact of program implementation discrepancy on job satisfaction and turnover intentions?

**Hypothesis 1B:** Principal-school counselor relationship will have a positive direct effect on job satisfaction and a negative direct effect on turnover intentions. Program implementation discrepancy will have a negative mediating effect on job satisfaction and a positive mediating impact on turnover intentions.

There was no evidence of a relationship in the pilot sample between principal-school counselor relationship and job satisfaction ( $r < .01, p = .99$ ), and there was a small negative correlation between principal-school counselor relationship and turnover intentions ( $r = -.23, p = .21$ ). The correlations associated with the hypothesized direct effects were both non-significant. The relationship between program discrepancy and job satisfaction was negative and moderate ( $r = -.64, p = .01$ ). The correlation between

program implementation discrepancy and turnover intentions was small and non-significant ( $r = .27, p = .17$ ).

Table 6.

*Correlation Matrix for Variables in the Hypothesized Model.*

|                                       | 1  | 2     | 3     | 4      | 5    |
|---------------------------------------|----|-------|-------|--------|------|
| 1. Relationship                       | -- | .77** | -.32  | .00    | -.23 |
| 2. Decision Sharing                   |    | --    | -.40* | -.07   | -.19 |
| 3. Program Implementation Discrepancy |    |       | --    | -.64** | .27  |
| 4. Job Satisfaction                   |    |       |       | --     | -.34 |
| 5. Turnover Intentions                |    |       |       |        | --   |

*Note.* \* indicates statistical significance,  $p \leq .05$ . \*\* indicates statistical significance,  $p \leq .01$ . School counselors' use of advocacy skills was not included in the correlation matrix due to low principal response and the inability to match a substantive number of principal responses to school counselor responses.

*Discussion.* In this sample, the correlations between relationship quality and school counselor outcomes of interest were weaker than what previous research suggest. Specifically, previous researchers consistently have found a correlation between relationship quality and job satisfaction of approximately .50 and a correlation between relationship quality and turnover intentions of approximately -.37 (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The substantial difference between findings in previous research and this pilot study may have been due in part to the distribution of the relationship variable. The relationship variable was negatively skewed with a mean response of 4.25 on a 5-point scale and a standard deviation of .53. The respondents in this study reported that their relationship with their principal was overwhelmingly strong and there is little variance in response patterns.

The negatively skewed distribution of the relationship variable was not surprising in light of the attrition that occurred in survey completion in conjunction with the questions designed to match school counselor respondents with principals. Further, “principal-school counselor relationship” was emphasized in the email recruitment invitations and served as the title of the pilot study. There may be systematic differences between the relationship quality of respondents and non-respondents that are a result of the dyadic nature of this pilot study and the recruitment materials.

Despite finding only partial support for the hypotheses, the correlations with the outcomes of interest may be of practical significance. The strength of the relationships found in this pilot study compare favorably to recent findings in school counseling literature.

Program implementation discrepancy was most comparable to the total intervention discrepancy that Scarborough and Culbreth (in press) used as a primary outcome variable in their study. The total intervention discrepancy is the difference between the amount of time school counselors report spending on specific activities or interventions and how much time they would prefer to spend on those same activities. The principal-school counselor relationship and the social exchange of decision sharing have moderate negative relationships with program implementation discrepancy ( $r = -.32$  and  $r = -.40$ , respectively). The strength of these relationships is similar to the strongest relationships that Scarborough and Culbreth (in press) found in their study assessing the impact of twelve factors on total intervention discrepancy. Scarborough and Culbreth found that the correlation between school counselors’ outcome expectancies and the total

intervention discrepancy was  $r = -.35$  and school climate and total intervention discrepancy was  $r = -.31$ .

Although principal-school counselor relationship was not found to correlate significantly with job satisfaction ( $r = .00$ ), the relationship between program implementation and job satisfaction was statistically and practically significant ( $r = -.64$ ). Rayle (2006) found that job stress and mattering explained 35% of the variance in school counselors' job satisfaction. She reported a correlation between job stress and job satisfaction of  $-.41$ . Similarly, the relationship between mattering and job satisfaction was  $.44$ . Rayle's findings were more substantive than the other recent investigation into school counselors' job satisfaction. Baggerly and Osborn (2006) explored correlates of school counselors' career satisfaction, and the strongest relationship found by these researchers was with stress ( $r = -.30$ ).

To date, no practically significant predictors of turnover intentions have been identified in the school counseling literature. The statistically significant findings of Baggerly and Osborn's (2006) investigation into correlates with career commitment were all small (i.e.,  $-.11 \leq r \leq 0$ ). Although the correlations with turnover intentions in this pilot study also were small (principal-school counselor relationship,  $r = -.23$  and program implementation discrepancy,  $r = .27$ ), these preliminary findings are slightly more substantive than correlates previously identified in the school counseling literature.

**RQ2:** What is the factor structure of the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey?

The pilot sample size is too small to warrant an initial exploration into the factor structure of the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.

**RQ3:** To what degree do school counselors perceive that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important?

*Descriptive Statistics.* The perceived importance scale of the *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation Survey* is set to a four-point Likert scale. Respondents were prompted to indicate the degree to which they perceived it important to implement a specific aspect of comprehensive school counseling programs in their schools (1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, and 4 = very important). The mean response for the full scale was 3.38, with a range of 2.7 to 4.0 and standard deviation of .41. The majority of the respondents perceived that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important or very important, and there was little variation in their responses.

Table 7.

*Descriptive Statistics for the Degree to Which School Counselors Perceive Implementing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program is Important.*

|                |    | Perceived<br>Importance of<br>CSCP |
|----------------|----|------------------------------------|
| Mean           |    | 3.38                               |
| Std. Deviation |    | 0.41                               |
| Skewness       |    | -0.18                              |
| Kurtosis       |    | -0.97                              |
| Range          |    | 1.30                               |
| Percentiles    | 25 | 3.01                               |
|                | 50 | 3.38                               |
|                | 75 | 3.64                               |

*Discussion.* It was hypothesized that the majority of respondents would perceive implementing a comprehensive school counseling programs to be “somewhat important” (2) or “important” (3). The descriptive statistics associated with this pilot study, however, indicate that respondents perceive it is more important than anticipated to implement comprehensive school counseling programs. This finding is consistent with Sink and Yillik-Downer’s (2001) pre-ASCA National Model finding that the majority of school counselors perceived comprehensive school counseling programs to be “very important.”

**RQ4:** What is the effect of how recently school counselors attended a school counseling conference and completed a graduate-level school counseling course as well as how frequently they read ASCA publications on their perceptions of the importance of comprehensive school counseling programs?

*Multiple regression.* Although there was not sufficient power as a result of the pilot data sample size to detect significant predictors if they exist, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore this research question. Three predictors were entered in the regression model using the enter method: number of ASCA articles read in a typical two month period, years since last completing a school counseling course, and years since last attending a school counseling conference. The full model was non-significant ( $F = 2.01$ ,  $df = 3, 22$ ,  $p = .15$ ) and the adjusted  $R^2$  was .12. None of the individual predictors were statistically significant. Years since last completing a school counseling course and years since last attending a school counseling conference were moderately statistically significance and warrant exploration in the full study.

Table 8.

*Multiple Regression Analysis of School Counselors' Perceived Importance of Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation.*

| <u>Variables in Model</u>                                 | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>R</i> | <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> | $\Delta R^2$ | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Years Since Last Attending a School Counseling Conference | -.29     | -1.41    | .176     |          |                       |              |          |          |
| Years Since Last Completing a School Counseling Course    | -.30     | -1.52    | .145     |          |                       |              |          |          |
| Average Number of ASCA Articles Read in a 2 Month Period  | .19      | .95      | .355     |          |                       |              |          |          |
| Overall Model Statistics                                  |          |          |          | .49      | .24                   | .12          | 2.01     | .15      |

*Note.* Adjusted  $R^2$  is the statistic used to evaluate the amount of variance explained in this model.

*Discussion.* Substantive conclusions should not be drawn from this analysis because of the small sample size ( $n = 23$ ). The sample sized associated with this research question was smaller than the sample size for other analyses in the pilot study because some respondents did not complete the predictor variable items that were part of the demographic questionnaire. There was not adequate power (.39) to detect significant results if they existed (Faul & Erldfelder, 1992).

Considering these results in combination with previous research does, however, provide insight into the potential for practical significance of these findings. Only one study has been conducted to date assessing factors that predict school counselors' perceptions of comprehensive school counseling programs. Sink and Yillik-Downer (2001) assessed the impact of school counselors' concerns about implementing



comprehensive school counseling programs and background or demographic variables on perceived importance of comprehensive school counseling programs. Two concern-related scales (task and total concerns) accounted for 12% of the variance in perceived importance. In a separate multiple regression analysis, six background or demographic variables were entered into the regression equation. Three of the variables produced statistically significant results ( $R^2 = .04$ ) that the authors attributed to a large sample size ( $n = 1,003$ ). Sink and Yillik-Downer suggested that the findings related to task concerns are of practical significance to the field of school counseling; however, the findings related to the background or demographic variables have little practical meaning to the profession. From this, it appears that the amount of variance explained in the pilot study (12%) may be practically significant to the school counseling profession.

#### Procedural Changes

The vast majority of the attrition in the pilot study occurred on the demographic page where participants were prompted to provide information to match them with the principal or school counselors with whom they work. Given the low response rates and what appears to be hesitancy on some respondents' part to complete the items that were designed to match dyads of principals and school counselors who work together, it seems unlikely that in the full study a meaningful percentage of matched dyads of principals and school counselors could be secured. As a result, the population was shifted from dyads of principals and school counselors who work together in the pilot study to only school counselors for the full study.

Utilizing LMX theory to guide research that takes only the members' perspective onto the relationship into account is the most prevalent approach to assessing outcomes of the relationship (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Paglis & Green, 2002). Substantially fewer investigations have included both the leader and the members' perspective on the relationship. Thus, the shift in population not only is practical but also is consistent with previous applications LMX theory.

In addition to the change in participants from dyads of principals and school counselors who work together to only school counselors, several additional changes were made to the full study procedures based upon the pilot study. Specifically, the changes impacted the email recruitment invitation, the online survey settings, and the demographic questionnaire.

The email invitations have been revised to deemphasize principal-school counselor relationships while continuing to accurately represent the purpose of the proposed study (Appendix A). The purpose of this procedural change was to reduce the hypothesized systematic difference in principal-school counselor relationship between respondents and non-respondents. It was anticipated that removing the items that were needed to match dyads of respondents together from the full study demographic questionnaire also would help with this potential threat to the validity of the study.

While designing the survey, the researcher may choose to "require" some responses. This means that if a respondent skips a required item, he or she is prompted to complete the item and cannot move to the next page without endorsing a response. In the pilot study, the only items that required a response were those associated with providing

informed consent and matching dyads of respondents together. For example, in the pilot study unless a respondent completed the questions related to matching dyads they could not progress beyond the demographic page. In the full study, the informed consent continued to require a response and all items that were used to answer research questions also were required. Demographic items that were present for the purpose of describing the participants remained optional. This allowed participants the freedom to choose not to answer demographic questions (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) and complete the study while encouraging complete responses on items that are essential to answering research questions.

An additional item was added to the demographic questionnaire, and required, prompting participants to indicate whether or not they are licensed/credentialed school counselors. School counselors were defined in Chapter I of this study as licensed or credentialed professionals, and the pilot study design did not allow for determining if all respondents were, in fact, licensed/credentialed as school counselors. The three items that were designed to match dyads of respondents will be removed from the demographic questionnaire.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was tri-fold. The first purpose was to assess the relevance of LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) as the foundation for explaining variance in important school counselor outcomes: role definition, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The second purpose was to determine the degree to which school counselors think that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program that is aligned with the ASCA National Model is important and to identify factors that may influence their perceptions. Finally, outcomes of school counselors' use of self-advocacy skills were evaluated. In this chapter, the results from the current study are presented.

#### Instrument Reliability

Reliability analyses of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for all instruments were conducted on the final sample of 188 school counselors who met the research criteria. All instrumentation reliability estimates were found to be within an acceptable range ( $\alpha = .80$  to  $.95$ ) for conducting research (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the measurement of each construct in the hypothesized model and instrument used in analyses are presented in Table 9. The reliability estimates for the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey were based upon the factor structure found through answering research question two of the current study.

Table 9.

*Reliability Information.*

| <i>Instruments</i>  | <i>Number of Items</i> | <i>Cronbach's Alpha</i> |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Leader-member exchange seven<br>(Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995)  | 7                      | .95                     |
| School counselor advocacy questionnaire<br>(Clemens, 2007b)   | 11                     | .87                     |
| Principal decision sharing<br>(Yukl, Wall, & Lepsinger, 1990)   | 9                      | .93                     |
| School counseling activities discrepancy scale<br>(Clemens, 2007a)  | 20 (2-part)            | .85                     |
| School counseling program implementation survey<br>(Elsner & Carey, n.d)  |                        |                         |
| <i>CSCP Implementation</i>  | 15                     | .88                     |
| <i>Perceived Importance of CSCP</i>   | 15                     | .87                     |
| <i>Use of Computer Software for Data Management</i>   | 6                      | .80                     |
| Job satisfaction item set<br>(Rayle, 2006)  | 10                     | .83                     |
| Turnover intentions item set  | 2                      | .89                     |
| <i><u>Construct Measurement</u></i>   |                        |                         |
| Program Implementation Discrepancy<br><i>School counseling program implementation<br/>    survey discrepancy score &amp; School counseling<br/>    activities discrepancy scale</i> | 40 (2-part)            | .91                     |

*Note.*  $N = 188$  for all scales and item sets with the exception of job satisfaction.  $N = 118$  for job satisfaction because the reliability estimate was calculated based on observations where all ten items were endorsed as applicable by the respondents.

## Testing of Hypotheses

### *Research Question 1*

Research question one was designed to test the hypothesized model and consisted of several parts. The primary research question assessed how well the model as a whole fit the data (RQ1). Sub-research questions addressed the strength and direction of specified relationships in the model. The model was estimated using the weighted least squares method via LISREL 8.80 (2006) and the solutions standardized. Variables in the model and a correlation matrix of the relationships among variables are presented followed by the results associated with each research question. Finally, the amount of variance explained in the endogenous variables of interest (school counseling program implementation discrepancy, school counselors' job satisfaction, and school counselors' turnover intentions) is reported.

*Descriptive statistics.* In Table 10, the descriptive statistics for the variables used to test the hypothesized model are presented. The variables principal-school counselor relationship, principal decision sharing, advocacy skills, and job satisfaction were negatively skewed, whereas, program implementation discrepancy and turnover intentions were positively skewed. The direction of skewness consistently aligned with the more socially desirable response. The means for program implementation discrepancy and turnover intentions were relatively low.

Table 10.

*Descriptive Statistics for Variables Included in the Hypothesized Model.*

|                   | Principal<br>School<br>Counselor<br>Relationship | Principal<br>Decision<br>Sharing | School<br>Counselor<br>Advocacy<br>Skills | Program<br>Implementation<br>Discrepancy | Job<br>Satisfaction | Turnover<br>Intentions |
|-------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------------|------------------------|
| Mean              | 3.82   | 3.52                             | 3.23                                      | .71                                      | 3.23                | 2.62                   |
| Std.<br>Deviation | .99  | .92                              | .42                                       | .40                                      | .48                 | 1.92                   |
| Skewness          | -.80   | -.84                             | -.72                                      | 1.44                                     | -.63                | .85                    |
| Kurtosis          | -.03   | .00                              | 3.28                                      | 3.12                                     | -.43                | -.57                   |
| Observed<br>Range | 1.00–5.00  | 1.00–5.00                        | 1.09–4.00                                 | .08-2.48                                 | 2.00–4.00           | 1.00–7.00              |
| Likert<br>Scale   | 1-5  | 1-5                              | 1-5                                       | 0-3.5                                    | 1-5                 | 1-7                    |

*Note.*  $N = 188$ .

*Correlation among variables in the model.* Visual inspection of a scatter plot of the bivariate correlation matrix revealed no outliers. All relationships in the hypothesized model were found to be statistically significant at  $p \leq .01$ . Statistical significance is, however, in part a function of sample size.

Table 11.

*Correlation Matrix for Variables in the Model.*

|                                       | 1          | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          | 6          |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Relationship                       | <b>.95</b> | .44        | .82        | -.37       | .66        | -.38       |
| 2. Advocacy Skills                    | .48        | <b>.87</b> | .34        | -.34       | .37        | -.20       |
| 3. Decision Sharing                   | .87        | .38        | <b>.93</b> | -.34       | .58        | -.32       |
| 4. Program Implementation Discrepancy | -.40       | -.38       | -.37       | <b>.91</b> | -.57       | .31        |
| 5. Job Satisfaction                   | .74        | .58        | .66        | -.66       | <b>.83</b> | -.42       |
| 6. Turnover Intentions                | -.41       | .37        | .35        | .34        | -.49       | <b>.89</b> |

*Note.*  $N = 188$ . All correlations are statistically significant,  $p \leq .01$ . The top half of the matrix is observed correlations. The bottom half of the matrix is correlations corrected for unreliability of the measure. The Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates of the measures are on the diagonal in bold text.

**RQ1:** How well do the relationships expressed in the hypothesized model fit the data?

**Hypothesis 1:** The Chi Square fit statistic will be non-significant. Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) will not exceed .08, or a reasonable fit with the data.

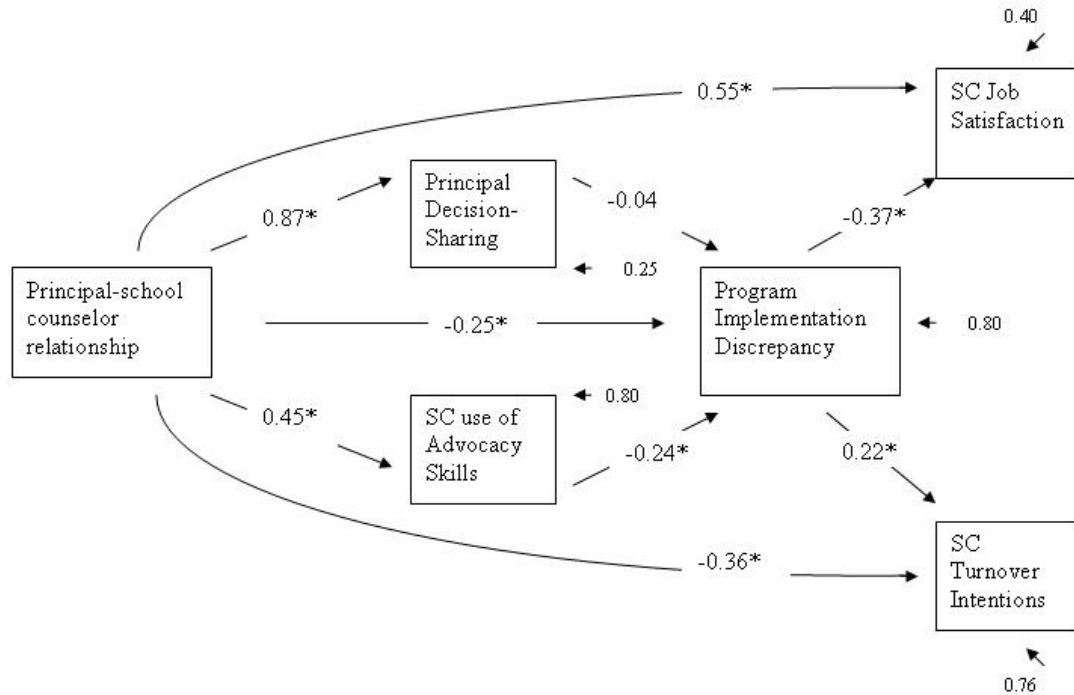
Using multiple fit statistics is essential to interpreting model fit because each index represents an aspect of model fit (Kline, 2005). Kline recommended reporting the Chi Squared fit statistic, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMSR) in all SEM analyses. It is important to note that although the Chi Squared statistic is the most frequently reported fit statistic for SEM analyses, it is not a good indicator of fit when the data are ordinal (Kline). The Chi Square statistic will be reported but should not be interpreted in the context of this model because the data are ordinal.

Support was found for hypothesis 1. The model fit the data well. The Chi Square fit statistic is non-significant ( $\chi^2 = 7.41, df = 6, p = .28$ ). Chi Square is a *badness of fit* index, as such failing to reject the null hypothesis is considered evidence of fit (Kline, 2005). The RMSEA is also a *badness of fit* indicator and adjusts for the parsimonious nature of the model. RMSEA statistics  $\leq .08$  is considered a reasonable fit and  $\leq .05$  is a good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1983). The RMSEA for this model was .04, or a good fit. The CFI compares the model tested to a null or baseline model. CFI values between .90 and 1.00 indicate good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The CFI for this model was .99. The SRMSR measures the mean absolute correlation residual, and statistics less than .10 indicate fit (Kline). The SRMSR was found to be .03.



Figure 6.

*Results of the Path Analysis.*



*Note.*  $N = 188$ , no data were missing. Estimation method was weighted least squares. Solutions were standardized. Error term for principal-school counselor relationship was fixed. \* indicates path coefficient was statistically significant at the  $p \leq .05$  level.

**RQ1A:** What is the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship and the mediating impacts of principal decision sharing and school counselors' use of advocacy skills on program implementation discrepancy?

**Hypothesis 1A:** There will be a negative direct effect estimate and negative mediating impacts on program implementation discrepancy.

Partial support was found for hypothesis 1A. Although the directions of the effect estimates were all consistent with the hypothesis, the variable principal decision sharing did not function as a mediating variable. The direct effect estimate of principal-school counselor relationship (-.25) and the mediating effect estimate of school counselors' use

of advocacy (-.24) were comparable and statistically significant. The mediating effect estimate of decision sharing on program implementation was non-significant (-.04). Thus, principal-school counselor relationship and school counselors use of advocacy skills influenced program implementation discrepancy, whereas, principal decision sharing did not impact program implementation discrepancy.

**Hypothesis 1B:** Principal-school counselor relationship will have a positive direct effect estimate on job satisfaction and a negative direct effect estimate on turnover intentions. Program implementation discrepancy will have a negative mediating effect estimate on job satisfaction and a positive mediating impact on turnover intentions.

Support was found for hypothesis 1B. The direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship and mediating effect of program implementation discrepancy on job satisfaction were statistically significant and consistent with the hypothesized directions. The direct effect estimate of principal-school counselor relationship on job satisfaction (.55) was larger than the mediating effect estimate of program implementation discrepancy (-.37). Similarly, the direct effect estimate of principal-school counselor relationship and mediating effect estimate of program implementation discrepancy on turnover intentions were statistically significant and consistent with the hypothesized directions. The direct effect estimate of principal school counselor relationship (-.36) was larger than the mediating effect estimate of program implementation discrepancy (.22) on turnover intentions. Thus, principal school counselor relationship has a greater effect on the endogenous variables job satisfaction and turnover intentions than program implementation discrepancy.

*Variance explained by the model.* The squared multiple correlations reduced form ( $\Delta R^2_{\text{snc}}$ ) indicate the amount of variance in an endogenous variable by the exogenous variables while controlling model complexity. Fifteen percent of the variance in school counseling program implementation, 49% of the variance in school counselors' job satisfaction, and 20% of the variance in school counselors' turnover intentions were explained by the model. The amount of variance explained in each of the endogenous variables of interest is considered to be practically significant in the field of school counseling and a large effect size ( $\geq 14\%$ ; Sink & Stroh, 2006).

### *Research Question 2*

**RQ2:** What is the factor structure of the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey?

### **Hypothesis 2:** Exploratory

An initial exploratory factor analysis of the 40 skills items on the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey was conducted using the maximum likelihood estimation method and varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .81. The Bartlett's test was significant. The KMO and Bartlett's test statistics indicated that the data were suitable for factor analytic procedures.

The decision to retain factors was guided by visual inspection of the scree plot, interpretability, parsimony, and amount of variance explained. Visual inspection of the scree plot revealed four factors appeared to be left scree, or real. A four factor solution, however, did not appear to be interpretable in the context of school counseling literature. As such, a more parsimonious three factor solution was considered. The amount of

variance explained by a three factor solution compared to a four factor solution differed by 5%. A three factor solution was selected because ease of interpretation outweighed the loss in variance explained.

A three factor solution accounted for 43% of the variance in the data. Four items were deleted because they did not load substantively on any of the factors. These four items consisted of both prompts, “to what degree is this implemented” and “how important is this to you” for two item stems. The item stems were “all students receive classroom guidance lessons designed to promote academic, social/personal, and career development” and “the program ensures that all students have academic plans that include testing, individual advisement, long-term planning, and placement.”

Fifteen of the items that began with the prompt “to what degree is this implemented.” loaded on one factor with a reliability estimate of  $\alpha = .88$  (factor 1, Table 12). Similarly fifteen items that began with the prompt “how important is this to you” loaded on a distinct factor with an  $\alpha = .87$  (factor 2, Table 12). These factors were labeled *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation* and *Perceived Importance of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*, respectively.

The six remaining items loaded most heavily on factor three, although five of these items also loaded on either factor 1 or factor 2. The common aspect of these six items was that the item stems all began with “school counselors use computer software to...”, as such this factor was labeled *Use of Computer Software for Data Management*,  $\alpha = .80$ . Thus, the decision to include the items that loaded on two factors on this third factor was guided by interpretability of subscales. The items associated with this factor

may not have separated based upon implemented and important prompts because the emphasis is on the tool (i.e., computer software) rather than the task (e.g., accessing student data).

Table 12.

*Rotated Factor Solution, Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.*

| <i>Item Stem</i>  | <i>Item Prompt</i>       | <i>Fac. 1</i>      | <i>Fac. 2</i>      | <i>Fac. 3</i>            |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| A written mission statement exists and is used as a foundation by all counselors            | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.50</b><br>.07  | .23<br><b>.60</b>  | -.02<br>.06              |
| Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them         | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.60</b><br>.12  | -.04<br><b>.36</b> | .05<br>-.16              |
| The program operates from a plan for closing the achievement gap...                         | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.60</b><br>.22  | .14<br><b>.44</b>  | .01<br>.00               |
| The program has a set of clear measurable student learning objectives and goals...          | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.53</b><br>.18  | .21<br><b>.59</b>  | -.06<br>-.01             |
| Needs assessments are completed regularly and guide program planning                        | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.59</b><br>.01  | .03<br><b>.63</b>  | .14<br>.06               |
| The program has an effective referral and follow-up system for handling student crises      | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.46</b><br>.12  | .08<br><b>.46</b>  | -.03<br>-.11             |
| School counselors use student performance data to decide how to meet student needs          | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.61</b><br>.14  | .11<br>.60         | .26<br>.23               |
| School counselors analyze student data...to identify interventions to close achievement gap | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.55</b><br>.12  | .22<br><b>.63</b>  | .21<br>.23               |
| School counselor job descriptions match actual duties                                       | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.57</b><br>-.08 | -.02<br><b>.47</b> | -.00<br>.09              |
| School counselors spend at least 80% of their in activities that directly benefit students  | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.54</b><br>.15  | .03<br><b>.36</b>  | -.08<br>-.06             |
| The school counseling program includes interventions...to educate all students...           | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.74</b><br>.16  | .13<br><b>.59</b>  | .03<br>-.02              |
| An annual review is conducted to get information for improving next year's program          | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.63</b><br>.15  | .06<br><b>.65</b>  | .12<br>.14               |
| School counselors use computer software to access student data                              | Implemented<br>Important | .29<br>-.11        | -.11<br>.37        | <b>.56</b><br><b>.38</b> |
| School counselors use computer software to analyze student data                             | Implemented<br>Important | .36<br>-.12        | -.10<br>.48        | <b>.79</b><br><b>.60</b> |
| School counselors use computer software to use data for school improvement                  | Implemented<br>Important | .41<br>-.10        | .00<br>.53         | <b>.74</b><br><b>.57</b> |
| The school counseling program has resources to allow counselors... professional development | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.47</b><br>.06  | .15<br><b>.50</b>  | .19<br>-.02              |
| School counseling priorities are represented On curriculum and education committees         | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.44</b><br>.05  | .15<br><b>.53</b>  | .21<br>.08               |
| School counselors communicate with parents to coordinate student achievement...             | Implemented<br>Important | <b>.60</b><br>.22  | .20<br><b>.65</b>  | .22<br>.13               |

*Note.* Bolded factor loadings indicate that the item is associated with the corresponding factor.

### *Research Question 3*

**RQ3:** To what degree do school counselors perceive that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important?

**Hypothesis 3:** The mean response will be within the range of “somewhat important” to “important” (i.e., range 2.00 – 3.00).

The Perceived Importance of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program subscale is a 15 item measure set to a four-point Likert scale. Respondents were prompted to indicate the degree to which they perceived it important to implement a specific aspect of comprehensive school counseling programs in their schools (1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, and 4 = very important).

Support was not found for hypothesis three that school counselors would predominately endorse a neutral response on the Perceived Importance of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program subscale of the Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation Survey. The mean response for the scale was 3.43, with a range of 2.00 to 4.00 and standard deviation of .40. Thirty-two of the respondents' (17.02%) report was consistent with the hypothesis that implementation a comprehensive school counseling program was “somewhat important” to “important” to them, as defined by a mean response of 2.00-3.00. The majority of respondents, however, reported more positive perceptions than hypothesized of comprehensive school counseling programs. One hundred fifty-six of the respondents (82.98%) reported that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important to very important (i.e., mean response of > 3.00).

Figure 7.

*Frequency Count of Mean Scores on Perceived Importance of Comprehensive School  
Counseling Program Subscale*

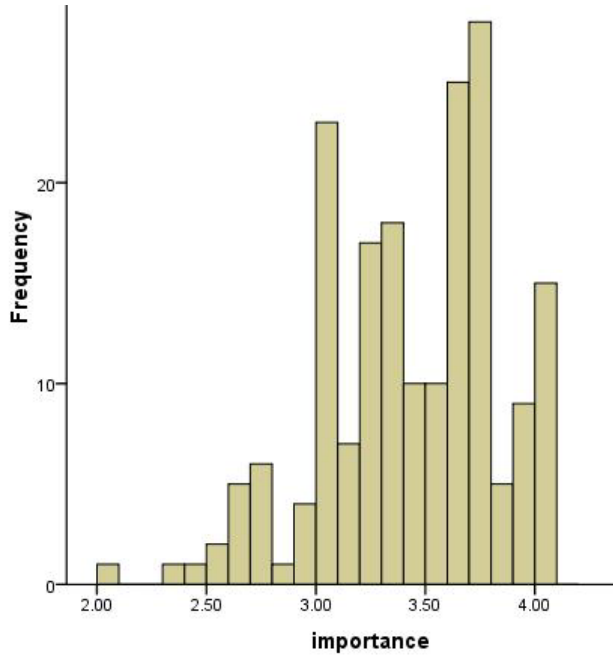


Table 13.

*Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Importance of Implementing a Comprehensive  
School Counseling Program.*

|                |    | Perceived Importance of CSCP |
|----------------|----|------------------------------|
| Mean           |    | 3.43                         |
| Std. Deviation |    | .40                          |
| Skewness       |    | -.60                         |
| Kurtosis       |    | .00                          |
| Range          |    | 2.00 – 4.00                  |
| Percentiles    | 25 | 3.13                         |
|                | 50 | 3.47                         |
|                | 75 | 3.73                         |

*Note.*  $N = 188$ .



#### *Research Question 4*

**RQ4:** What is the effect of how recently school counselors attended a school counseling conference and completed a graduate-level school counseling course as well as how frequently they read ASCA publications on their perceptions of the importance of comprehensive school counseling programs?

**Hypothesis 4:** The year in which school counselors most recently attended a school counseling conference, year of most recent completion of a graduate-level school counseling course, frequency of reading ASCA publications will have a medium effect (i.e.,  $\Delta R^2 \geq .06$ , Sink & Stroh, 2006) on perceived importance of comprehensive school counseling programs. All relationships will be positive.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer this research question. Three predictors were entered in the regression model using the enter method: number of ASCA articles read in a typical two month period, years since last completing a school counseling course, and years since last attending a school counseling conference. Enter method was used because there is not a literature base to indicate which variable should be entered in the model first. The dependent variable was the factor score of the Perceived Importance of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs subscale of the Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation Survey. Principal component scores were used as the dependent variable because it is the single score that retains the most amount of the information in contained in the original variables. Descriptive statistics for the independent variables are presented in Table 14.

Respondents were given the option to indicate that they could not remember how many years it had been since last attending a school counseling conference or completing a school counseling course. The missing data reflects the respondents who reported being unable to recall the year. The amount of missing data for years since conference ( $n = 39$ ) may have affected the predictive power of this variable. Respondents who have not attended a conference recently might have had more difficulty recalling the year than those who attend school counseling conferences regularly. Eighty-six respondents (45.74%) reported that they do not typically read ASCA articles.

Table 14. *Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables.*

|                | Years Since<br>Conference | Years Since<br>Course | Ave. Number of<br>ASCA Articles |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mean           | 2.03                      | 8.42                  | 1.43                            |
| Std. Deviation | 1.65                      | 8.21                  | 2.00                            |
| Skewness       | 1.90                      | 1.50                  | 1.68                            |
| Kurtosis       | 3.20                      | 1.75                  | 2.74                            |
| Range          | 0 - 8                     | 0 - 36                | 0 - 10                          |

*Note.*  $N = 149$  for years since conference.  $N = 187$  for years since course.  $N = 175$  for average number of ASCA articles read in a two month period.

There was no evidence of support for hypothesis 4. The full model was non-significant ( $F = 1.43$ ,  $df = 3, 135$ ,  $p = .26$ ) and the  $\Delta R^2$  was .01. None of the individual predictors were statistically significant. The sample size ( $n = 138$ ) was smaller than for other research questions because some participants indicated that they could not remember when they were last enrolled in a school counseling course or attended a conference. Also, several responses to the question “how many ASCA articles do you typically read in a two month period” were removed from the analyses because the appeared to be a year (e.g., 2008 or 2007) rather than a number falling within the more

typical response range of (0-10). Despite the smaller sample size, there was sufficient power ( $\geq .80$ ) to detect a significant difference given the specified effect size (.06) if one existed (Faul & Erldfelder, 1992).

Table 15.

*Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting School Counselors' Perceived Importance of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.*

|   | <i>B</i>   | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>R</i> | <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> | $\Delta R^2$ | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---|------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| <u>Variables in Model</u>                                 |            |          |          |          |                       |              |          |          |
| Years Since Last Attending a School Counseling Conference | .02        | 2.00     | .84      | .        |                       |              |          |          |
| Years Since Last Completing a School Counseling Course    | -.16       | -1.83    | .06      | .        |                       |              |          |          |
| Average Number of ASCA Articles Read in a 2 Month Period  | -.05       | -.53     | .60      |          |                       |              |          |          |
| Overall Model   | Statistics |          |          | .17      | .03                   | .01          | 1.35     | .26      |

*Note.*  $\Delta R^2$  is the statistic used to evaluate the amount of variance explained in this model.

### Summary

In this chapter, results of the current study were reported. Participant demographics, instrument reliability, and results of the research questions presented. Hypotheses 1 and 1b were fully supported. Hypothesis 1a was partially supported. Hypothesis 2 was exploratory. Hypotheses 3 and 4 were not supported. In the next chapter, potential interpretations, significance for practice, directions for future research, and limitations of these findings are discussed.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the results of the current study beginning with an overview of the participants and results related to instrumentation. Subsequently, the relevance of LMX theory for explaining variance in how school counselors' roles are defined at the building level, school counselors' job satisfaction, and their turnover intentions are discussed. The salience of the best practice recommendation of school counselors advocating for their role is considered in the context of findings from this study. School counselors' perception of comprehensive school counseling programs and measurement of comprehensive school counseling program implementation are considered in the context of design of future research studies aimed at narrowing the gap between current and best practice. Potential implications of major findings are presented. Directions for future research are provided.

#### Participants

The current study was conducted in the spring of 2008 with a random sample of licensed or certified school counselors from 23 school districts housed in three southeast states. A total of 188 school counselors participated in the study, yielding a response rate of 32.41%. Detailed description of the sample was presented in Chapter IV.

### Instrumentation

The instrumentation consisted of seven scales or item sets. The reliability of all scales, subscales, and item sets used in the analyses were solid ( $\alpha = .83$  to  $.95$ ). The reliability of instruments is particularly important for path analysis as unreliable instruments can inflate path coefficients (Kaplan, 2000). The Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates for the measures used in the hypothesized model are appropriate for this type of analysis. As such, the path coefficients are valid for interpretation in the current study.

### Relevance of LMX Theory

A review of counseling and educational literature revealed no previous applications of LMX theory to principals and school counselors. Testing the hypothesized model provided initial insight into the relevance of LMX theory to the population of principals and school counselors who work together. The model included endogenous variables that were behavioral (program implementation discrepancy), cognitive (turnover intentions), and affective (job satisfaction). Thus, it functioned as an example of the explanatory power of LMX theory for exploring multiple domains of a school counselor's experience.

### *Research Question 1*

The fit of a hypothesized model was tested in research question one. Fit of the model was evaluated by considering fit statistics from three families: badness of fit, comparative fit, and correlation residuals. The results indicated that the model fit the data well. Thus, LMX theory appears to have relevance for understanding how school counselors' roles are defined at the building level, school counselors' job satisfaction, and

school counselors' turnover intentions. In addition to model fit, considering the amount of variance explained in endogenous variables of interest and practical significance of the findings is important. The sub-research questions were designed to assess explanatory power of exogenous variables and to guide discussion of practical significance.

#### *Research question 1a*

Researching school counselors' roles is not new (Aubrey, 1977; Baker & Gerler, 2007; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Myrick, 1993); however, the focus of research concerning school counselors' roles is shifting from describing the gap between current and best practices to identifying solutions (Scarborough & Culbreth, in press). Research question 1a was designed to align with this trend in research by applying the role-making process described by LMX theorists (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; 1995) to how school counselors' roles are defined at the building level. Principal-school counselor relationship grounded this portion of the model, and social exchanges were hypothesized to serve mediating functions. This allowed for testing the conceptual assertions that principal-school counselor relationship (Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007; Meyer, 2005; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Zalaquett, 2005) and school counselors advocating for their role (Dollarhide et al.; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press; Trusty & Brown, 2005) may affect how school counselors' roles are defined at the building level. Additionally, the LMX construct of decision sharing was introduced as a potentially relevant social exchange between principals and school counselors.

Fifteen percent of the variance in program implementation discrepancy was explained by the model. The direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship and

mediating effect of school counselors' use of advocacy skills significantly impacted program implementation discrepancy. Principal decision sharing did not function as a mediating variable. There was no evidence that principal decision sharing impacted program implementation discrepancy in the presence of principal-school counselor relationship.

The constructs of principal-school counselor relationship and school counselors' use of advocacy skills had a significant effect on how school counselors' roles were defined at the building level. The direction of the path coefficients indicated that the stronger school counselors perceived their relationship to be with their principal, the narrower the discrepancy between how school counselors are currently implementing their programs and what they believe is ideal. When school counselors advocate for their role, the discrepancy in program implementation was also smaller. Further, school counselors used advocacy skills was positively influenced by the quality of the relationship with their principal. School counselors' who reported higher quality relationships with their principals also reported using more of the skills that Trusty and Brown (2005) described to advocate for their role. These findings are consistent with school counseling literature and best practice recommendations (Dollarhide, et al, 2007; Scarborough & Culbreth, in press; Trusty & Brown).

The social exchange of principal-decision sharing was highly correlated with principal-school counselor relationship ( $r = .82$ ). Although these constructs are distinct in LMX literature (Paglis & Green, 2002), school counselors in this study did not differentiate substantially between relationship quality and principals' propensity to share

relevant decisions. Much of the explained variance in program implementation discrepancy was shared by principal-school counselor relationship and program implementation discrepancy. Thus, including the construct of principal-decision sharing of the model may have increased the model's complexity unnecessarily. Given the importance of principal-decision sharing for school counselors, it is possible that this is the primary aspect of the relationship and, as such, is not a distinct construct for school counselors.

*Significance.* The results of research question 1a are both statistically and practically significant. The amount of variance explained (15%) in program implementation discrepancy is a large effect (Sink & Stroh, 2006). Practical significance to the field, however, is not defined solely by effect size but also includes considering the finding in the context of previous research (Sink & Stroh).

The program implementation discrepancy variable is most comparable to the total intervention discrepancy that Scarborough and Culbreth (in press) used as a primary outcome variable in their study aimed at narrowing the gap between current and preferred school counseling practice. The total intervention discrepancy is the difference between the amount of time school counselors report spending on specific activities or interventions and how much time they would prefer to spend on those same activities

The principal-school counselor relationship, the social exchange of decision sharing, and school counselors' use of advocacy skills have moderate negative relationships with program implementation discrepancy ( $r = -.37, -.34, -.34$ , respectively). The strength of these relationships is similar to the strongest relationships



that Scarborough and Culbreth (in press) found in their study assessing the impact of twelve factors on total intervention discrepancy. Scarborough and Culbreth found that the correlation between school counselors' outcome expectancies and the total intervention discrepancy was  $r = -.35$  and school climate and total intervention discrepancy was  $r = -.31$ . Thus, considering the results of the current study in context with previous research supports the conclusion that predictive the exogenous variables in this study are significant practically as well as statistically.

*Program implementation variable.* The descriptive statistics associated with the program implementation variable may also be of interest to researchers and practitioners in the field of school counseling. School counselors in the current study reported what may appear to be a relatively small discrepancy between how their role is currently defined and their ideal role, but in practice this is a substantial discrepancy. The potential range of scores was 0-3.5, and the mean for this sample was .71 and range .08 – 2.48. This finding is slightly elevated compared to Scarborough and Culbreth's (in press) finding that school counselors reported a mean discrepancy of .60 on a four point scale between how much time they actually spent on tasks and how much time they preferred to spend. Scarborough and Culbreth found that the difference between how school counselors reported spending their time and preferring to spend their time was statistically significant and a large effect size. From this, it appears that school counselors are continuing to struggle with role definition at the building level.

### *Research Question 1b*

The constructs of job satisfaction and turnover intentions have received minimal attention in school counseling literature to date (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006). The purpose of research question 1b was to merge the substantial empirical base connecting superior-subordinate relationships to the constructs of job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Gerstner & Day, 1997) with the limited school counseling literature in this area.

Forty-nine percent of the variance in school counselors' job satisfaction and 20% of the variance in turnover intentions was explained by the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship and the mediating effect of program implementation discrepancy. The difference in the amount of variance explained in job satisfaction compared to turnover intentions is consistent with previous LMX findings. Researchers who have grounded studies in LMX theory typically explain more variance in affective measures (e.g., job satisfaction) than in cognitive or behavioral constructs (Gerstner & Day, 1997).

The stronger the relationship between a principal and school counselor and the more closely that the school counseling program aligns with how a school counselor would ideally define her or his role, the more satisfied that school counselor is in her or his job and the less likely he or she is to pursue or accept employment outside of the school in the coming year. Comparing the relative weight of the path coefficients indicated that principal-school counselor relationship had a greater influence on job satisfaction and turnover intentions than program implementation discrepancy. The findings associated with the direct effect of principal-school counselor relationship are

consistent with applications of LMX research in other fields (Gerstner & Day, 1997) and the mediating effects align with Baker's (2000) conceptual assertion that school counselors' roles have implications for job satisfaction and future employment plans.

*Significance.* The amount of variance in school counselors' job satisfaction explained by the two exogenous variables, principal-school counselor relationship and program implementation discrepancy, is statistically and practically significant. The size of the overall effect is large (Sink & Stroh, 2006) and the explanatory power of both exogenous variables compares favorably or exceeds that of variables previously used in school counseling research (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Rayle, 2006).

#### Research Question 2

The purpose of exploring the factor structure of the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (SCPIS) was to take a next step in the development and validation process for this instrument. The results of the exploratory factor analysis revealed several strengths of the instrument: interpretable factors and solid reliability estimates. The primary observed weakness was the amount of variance in the data accounted for by the factor solution.

A three factor solution emerged from the data: *Comprehensive School Counseling Program Implementation* (factor 1), *Perceived Importance of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs* (factor 2), and *Use of Computer Software for Data Management* (factor 3). The first two factors align well with what the instrument, as a whole, appears to measure. Each item has two prompts "to what degree is this implemented" and "how important is this to you." Factor one is comprised of 15 of the items with the prompt "to

what degree is this implemented” and factor two is made up of the same 15 items paired with the prompt “how important is this to you.” Factors one and two have particularly good face validity.

The third factor is comprised of all of the items (6) that are focused on school counselors’ use of computer software. There is a clear theme that unites these items and separates the items from the rest of the instrument. Thus, it is interpretable as a distinct construct.

In addition to interpretability of factors, there are also psychometric properties that inform the use of the SCPIS as a three factor measure. The factors behave well as independent constructs from a psychometric perspective as evidenced by solid reliability estimates ( $\alpha$ ’s ranged from .80 to .88) and there was no evidence of correlation among the factors. The chief limitation of the instrument that emerged from this factor analysis is the amount of variance explained by the selected factor solution (43%). As such, much of the richness of the data is lost by reducing the forty-items to three factors.

Although the amount of variance explained by the factor solution is a substantial psychometric limitation, it is important to consider this limitation in the context of other measures related to school counseling programs. Much of the research on school counseling programs to date has been conducted using instruments that were *researcher designed* for a specific research study. The dimensionality of such instruments is often not reported in the literature. A notable exception to this measurement issue is the School Counseling Activity Rating Scale (SCARS). Scarborough (2005) conducted a factor analysis on the SCARS and reported accounting for 47.27 % and 45.22% of the variance

in 40 items with a four factor solution. The amount of variance explained by the factor structure on the SCARS is comparable to the SCPIS. Thus, despite the minimal amount of variance explained by the factor solution presented, the SCPIS is among the more statistically robust measures available.

### Research Question 3

Little is known about school counselors' perception of comprehensive school counseling programs. Research question three was designed to describe the degree to which school counselors perceive that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important. It was hypothesized that school counselors' response would be neutral. Specifically, school counselors would predominately report that implementing a school counseling program was "somewhat important" to "important." No support was found for this hypothesis.

School counselors overwhelmingly reported more positive perceptions of comprehensive school counseling programs and that it is "important" to "very important" to them to implement a comprehensive school counseling program. This is a positive finding for the profession because it may indicate that school counselors are open to direction on how to implement such programs. Further, principals' perceptions of school counselors' roles are impacted by the school counselors with whom they work (Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005). When principals' work with school counselors who believe that it is important to implement comprehensive school counseling programs, then those principals may value comprehensive school counseling programs. Principals' perceptions of comprehensive school counseling programs is important to the profession because

principals play a substantial role in defining school counselors' roles at the building level (Dahir, 2000; Mustaine et al, 1996, Ponec & Brott, 2000; Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994).

#### Research Question 4

The final research question was crafted as an initial step toward developing an understanding of factors that contribute to school counselors' perception of comprehensive school counseling programs. The explanatory power of years since completing a graduate level school counseling course, years since attending a school counseling conference, and average number of ASCA articles read in a two-month period was assessed. No evidence was found for the hypothesis that a moderate amount of variance was explained by this combination of variables. In fact, there was no evidence that these variables explained a statistically or practically significant amount of variance in school counselors' perception of comprehensive school counseling programs. The non-significant findings did not contribute to the goal of identifying factors salient to school counselors' perception of comprehensive school counseling programs. Descriptive statistics associated with the variables, however, may inform future research.

The findings may be due in part to limitations of some of the variables. There was a limited amount of variance in the dependent variable. As noted in the discussion of research question three, school counselors in the current study reported very positive perceptions of comprehensive school counseling programs. It is difficult to explain variance in a homogenous variable.

Limitations also were evident in two of the three independent variables. A substantial number of school counselors ( $n = 39/188$ ) reported that they could not

remember when they last attended a school counseling conference. Thus, the validity and predictive power of the years since attending a school counseling conference variable may have been diminished by systematic differences between those who could recall the year when they most recently attended a conference and those who could not.

Additionally, almost half of school counselors reported reading zero ASCA articles on a regular basis. Often, frequency count variables are susceptible to violations of normality, and this variable was highly skewed. An alternate approach could have been treating the variable as categorical and assessing if the respondents into groups who typically read one or more ASCA publications in a two month period differed from those who do not.

Perhaps the most salient pieces of information that emerged from this research question were insights into school counselors' participation in some professional development activities. Of those school counselors who reported recalling when they last attended a school conference the mean was 2.03 years ago with a standard deviation of 1.65. Many school counselors are attending school conferences annually or semi-annually. The recency of school counselors' completion of a graduate level course is much more varied ( $M = 8.42$ ,  $SD = 8.21$ ) than years since conference attendance. Almost half of the school counselors (45.74%) reported not reading ASCA publications.

Although this percentage is high considering that ASCA publications are designed for a practitioner audience (Auger, 2008), this may be a modest improvement compared to the findings Bauman et al's (2002) findings. Sixty percent of school counselors in Bauman et al's study reported not reading *Professional School Counselor*. Bauman et al did not

assess whether or not school counselors read ASCA's magazine, *the ASCA School Counselor*. As such, the findings are not directly comparable.

### Implications for Practice

The implications of this study affect school counselors, counselor educators, and principals. Discussion of the implications is organized by research question. Specifically, implications stemming from research question one (the model) are presented first. Subsequently, implications associated with research questions two through four are discussed as a group.

#### *Research questions 1, 1a, and 1b*

The results of this study indicate that it is important for school counselors and principals to foster relationships with each other. Relationship quality has implications for school counselors' work experience. Specifically, the quality of school counselors' relationship with their principals positively influences how school counselors' roles are defined, their job satisfaction, and intentions to continue employment at their current school. Developing high quality principal-school counselor relationships has implications for school counselors, counselor educators, principals, and educational leadership faculty's practice.

There are also substantive implications of this model related to school counselors' use of advocacy skills. School counselors' use of advocacy skills mediated the relationship between principal-school counselor relationship and program implementation discrepancy. Thus, the current study provides empirical support for the best practice recommendation for school counselors. Specifically, the model fit and path



coefficients are evidence that school counselors' can influence how their roles are defined at the building level through advocacy.

*School counselors and counselor educators.* Some of the same skills that school counselors use to demonstrate respect and gain trust with a client might be applicable to the principal-school counselor relationship. For example, school counselors can demonstrate respect for their principal by using active listening skills. Similarly, making intentional decisions about information disclosure demonstrates respect. Drawing on counseling skills may help school counselors to strengthen their relationship with principals.

The application of counseling skills to the principal-school counselor relationship can begin in counselor preparation programs. Discussing how counseling skills can be generalized to working with principals may help prepare school counselors-in-training for working effectively with principals. Further, resources such as Kaplan's (1995) article comparing and contrasting how principals and school counselors conceptualize situations may help school counselors in training to understand principals' perspectives and develop empathy for that unique role. Researching the *principal role* is similar to gathering information about a population of clients with whom a school counselor may have limited experience and knowledge.

Developing a strong working relationship with principals is the foundation for school counselors advocating for themselves and their role (Meyers, 2005; Trusty & Brown, 2005). The next step is for school counselors to use the advocacy skills that Trusty and Brown have delineated in the literature. When school counselors use these

advocacy skills, their programs are more likely to be implemented in a way that accurately reflects the school counselors' beliefs about practice.

Much like helping skills, developing advocacy skills takes practice. The results of this study provide support for counselor educators including advocacy skills in school counselor preparation courses. Additionally, counselor educators might encourage school counselors-in-training to look for opportunities to practice these skills during field experiences. Helping school counselors-in-training to develop advocacy skills is an important step toward closing the gap between current and best school counseling practices.

*Principals.* The findings from this study indicate that principals can have a substantial impact on school counselors' job satisfaction and turnover intentions by attending to their relationships with school counselors and how their school counselors' roles are defined. Principals have considerable responsibility in staffing their schools. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006) has reported a growing shortage of school counselors. Thus, job satisfaction and turnover intentions may be of practical importance to principals.

Principals seeking to improve their school counselors' job satisfaction and decrease turnover intentions might seek opportunities to communicate regularly with their school counselors and include them on the school leadership team. When school counselors feel like they are trusted and respected by their principal, they are more satisfied in their job and less likely to seek employment outside of their school. School counselors report feeling trusted and respected when their principals consult with them,

delegate appropriate decisions to them, and inform them of decisions that are relevant to their roles. Regular communication and involvement with the school leadership teams are concrete ways that principals can demonstrate to their school counselor that they are respected and trusted members of the school community.

Role definition is also a relevant aspect of school counselors' job satisfaction and turnover intentions. ASCA (2005) recommends that principals and school counselors use management agreements to define school counselors' roles. Developing a management agreement is similar to the process of drafting a contract that defines a school counselors' role in a particular school. If these management agreements are co-constructed and thoughtfully negotiated, they can provide a forum for each party to share what is important to her or him. A given school counselors' role can then be defined as a reflection of both parties' beliefs about school counseling and the needs of the school.

*Educational leadership training.* Leader-member exchange theory is a framework that educational leadership faculty members might consider utilizing to teach future school administrators about the importance of their relationship with subordinates. Prior to this study, LMX theory had not been applied to principals' relationship with school counselors or other members of the school faculty and staff. Sharing this model and highlighting the impact of the relationship on school counselors' job satisfaction and turnover intentions might inform future school administrators approach to working with school counselors and other subordinates.

### *Research Questions 2, 3, and 4*

The implications of findings associated with research questions two through four are presented as a group because the way that they inform practice is related. The implications of the findings extend to school counselors, school districts, and state level school counseling associations.

*School counselors.* The SCPIS is a tool that can be used by school counselors to evaluate the degree to which a comprehensive school counseling program is being implemented at a particular school. School counselors can use the SCPIS as a means of auditing their program and identifying opportunities for further program development. For example, the total SCPIS implementation score can serve as a baseline measure to assess progress toward comprehensive school counseling program implementation over time. Alternatively, considering results at the item level can provide school counselors with specific direction for opportunities for program growth.

*School districts.* Similarly, school district leaders might request that all school counseling departments complete the SCPIS to assess how well the district as a whole is implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. School districts leaders could also use this measure to assess school counselors' perception of implementing comprehensive school counseling program. Understanding both the degree of implementation and school counselor perceptions are important because those results can inform how time is spent in district level trainings or professional development workshops. Results might inform the balance of time spent during district level professional development activities between (a) how to implement a comprehensive

school counseling program and (b) why implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important.

*School counseling associations.* State level counseling associations may be particularly well positioned to help school counselors and school districts implement comprehensive school counseling programs through conference programming. School counseling conferences are a frequently used professional development activity. Programs that help school counselors implement comprehensive school counseling programs may be particularly relevant in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee because the results of the current study indicated that the majority of school counselors in these states believe that implementing comprehensive school counseling programs is important or very important.

### Implications for Research

Implications for research are based on the relevance of LMX theory, the model tested in this study, and the design of studies aimed at closing the gap between current and best school counseling practices.

#### *LMX theory*

The relevance of LMX theory to school counseling research is a substantive finding because there is a notable absence of a theoretical framework that has been successfully applied to multiple domains of school counselors' experience working in public schools. There is, however, a substantial LMX research base in other fields. Identifying aspects of LMX theory and research that are applicable to school counseling provides a foundation for the design of future studies.

Considering the strength of relationships among the variables in the hypothesized model in comparison to previous (non-school counseling) applications of LMX research provides insight into future research designs. The strength of relationships among variables included in the current study was slightly elevated compared to applications of LMX theory to other fields. Effect sizes found in other fields, therefore, may serve as a conservative indicator of the effect sizes likely to be found in LMX applications to school counseling research.

### *Model*

In addition to applying LMX theory to additional outcomes of interest to the school counseling profession, there are opportunities to refine and evaluate the model tested in the current study. Parsimonious models are preferable to complex models. Researchers might consider removing the decision sharing variable from the model and testing fit. Evaluating model fit across different populations of school counselors is also a relevant next step. One sample is not sufficient to evaluate fully a hypothesized model (Kaplan, 2000). Considering how well the model fits data associated with a variety of populations of school counselors (e.g., rural v. urban; elementary, middle, and high school counselors) could provide initial insight into the relevance of this model. Further, principals' perceptions could be included in the model.

### *Current Versus Best Practice Research Designs*

Researchers designing studies aimed at closing the gap between current and best practice face substantive challenges including measurement of constructs and limited information about school counselors' perception of best practice recommendations. There

is a dearth of instruments with solid psychometric properties when trying to ascertain the degree to which a school counselor or a program is aligning with best practice. Further, it is unclear in the literature whether or not school counselors want to implement best practice recommendations (e.g., the ASCA National Model). Thus, it is difficult to discern if the gap between current and best practice is a function of barriers external to school counselors or challenges within the profession. The results of the current study are initial steps toward resolving both these challenges. Further, the current study provides direction for additional studies designed to address these challenges.

Steps were taken in the current study to define the measurement of several constructs related to best practice. Specifically instrument development occurred for the purpose of (a) gathering process data related to how school counselors are spending their time (SCADS, Clemens, 2007a), (b) assessing comprehensive school counseling program implementation and perceptions of such programs (Elsner & Carey, n.d.), and (c) measuring school counselors' use of advocacy skills (Clemens, 2007b). The psychometric information resulting from this investigation can inform researchers' measurement decisions.

The SCADS (Clemens, 2007a) is an updated version of the SCARS (Scarborough, 2005) and aligns well with ASCA National Model. The SCADS allows researchers to collect process data on how school counselors are spending their time as well as the discrepancy between actual and preferred time on activities included in the National Model. Results from the pilot study and full study indicate that this measure is

reliable. Thus, this instrument may be helpful to researchers assessing the gap between current and preferred school counseling practice.

The SCPIS (Elsner & Carey, n.d.) was designed to assess the degree to which comprehensive school counseling programs are implemented. In the current study a companion scale was introduced that measures the degree to which school counselors perceive that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is important. No psychometric information, however, was available prior to this study for which researchers could use to evaluate the instrument. The results of the current study support the use of this instrument. Specifically, the exploratory factor analysis and reliability estimates can inform researchers' decision to utilize this instrument.

Further, the construct of program implementation discrepancy was introduced. This construct allows researchers to simultaneously consider the day to day gaps that may exist between how school counselors spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time and the discrepancy between aspects of comprehensive school counseling programs that are implemented and the degree to which school counselors perceive that implementation is important. The program implementation construct was measured by using the SCADS in conjunction with the SCPIS. The reliability of this construct was high ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

The skills that school counselors can use to advocate for their role are well defined in the literature (Trusty & Brown, 2005). A measure, however, has not been available to assess the degree to which a school counselor is using these skills. A self-report measure was developed for the purpose of this study and initial psychometric



information suggests the School Counselor Advocacy Questionnaire is a promising foundation for measuring school counselors' advocacy skills.

Continuing the development of the aforementioned instruments are areas for future research. The dimensionality of each instrument and construct warrants further investigation. There may also be opportunities to refine the measures so that more of the variance can be explained by the factors. In addition to further psychometric investigations, creating a principal-report measure of the School Counselor Advocacy Scale is warranted. The school counselor report measure is particularly susceptible to the social desirability bias because respondents are being asked to rate their use of specific skills that are considered to be part of best practice.

In addition to utilizing the measurement information that resulted from this study, researchers also may consider school counselors' perceptions of comprehensive school counseling programs when designing studies. Some researchers have chosen to use a discrepancy approach to designing studies regarding school counselors' roles. The discrepancy approach measures the gap between current practices and ideal practices from school counselors' perspective. The advantage of this type of discrepancy approach is that a current-ideal discrepancy does not assume that school counselors want to implement comprehensive developmental school counseling programs. The disadvantage of the current-ideal discrepancy approach is that it does not measure the gap between current and best practices.

The current-ideal discrepancy approach is a step removed from the goal of closing the gap between current and best practices. Most school counselors in the current study

reported that implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is “important” to “very important”. This provides some support for researchers to begin utilizing a current-best practice discrepancy approach. As researchers continue to assess school counselors’ beliefs about comprehensive school counseling programs that align with the ASCA National Model, it may become increasingly feasible to study directly factors that impact the gap between current and best practice.

#### Limitations of the Study

Although precautions were taken to minimize threats to the internal and external validity of the study, there are several noteworthy limitations that potentially impacted the validity of the current study. Threats to internal validity included reliance on self-report data, the use of researcher developed measurement instruments, and treating Likert-scale data as interval data. Threats to the external validity of this study included potential systematic differences between non-respondents and respondents as well as a sampling frame that was limited to a narrow geographical region.

Self-report data is susceptible to the social desirability bias (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999). Although such data is an appropriate means of gathering perception information (e.g., relationship quality, job satisfaction), the limitations of self-report data are more noteworthy for measures that are designed to be objective measures of behavior (e.g., school counselors’ use of advocacy skills). In an effort to minimize this threat, confidentiality was assured.

Several of the instruments used in the study were researcher developed or had limited psychometric information available to support their use. The results of the pilot

study provided some support for continuing with these measures, and the reliability estimates were all within an appropriate range for research in the full study. The dimensionality of some constructs, however, remains unknown and further investigations are necessary to establish the content validity of the measures. The validity of the measures may have impacted the results of the study.

The majority of the instrumentation was based on Likert scales. The Likert data were treated as interval Likert data in some of the analyses. This is a limitation because respondents are likely to interpret the points differently. In an effort to minimize this measurement issue, anchor points were included on all Likert scales and when possible each Likert score was defined.

Although steps were taken to maximize the response rate, it is possible that non-respondents differed in some systematic way from respondents. Due to the limited number of school counselor training programs in these states, it is possible that the measurement of some constructs were elevated or depressed compared to a national sample.

### Conclusion

LMX theory is a relevant theoretical foundation for explaining variance in how school counselors' roles are defined at the building level, their job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The findings from the study provide empirical support for the conceptual assertions the relationship between principals and school counselors who work together is essential to program implementation and maintenance and that school counselors can affect change in their role by advocating for themselves. Further, how

school counselors' roles are defined has substantial implications for school counselors' job satisfaction and future employment plans. Thus, it is important for school counselors and principals to foster their relationship and for counselor educators and educational leadership faculty to set the foundation for high quality principal-school counselor relationships in training programs. Attending to principal-school counselor relationships is an opportunity for research and practice to blend.

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## APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear [School Counselor's Name]:

I am a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a former school counselor. I am emailing to request your participation in my dissertation study. In this study, I am exploring factors that might affect how school counselors' roles are defined, their job satisfaction, and their future employment plans. The goal of this project is to help school counselors' define their roles in a way that makes sense for them and their school community and to increase school counselors' satisfaction with their job. Participation takes about 20 minutes and involves completing an online survey.

To learn more about this study and to participate please click on the following website link:

[Insert Link].

If you choose to participate in this study you may (a) request a copy of the results and (b) be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elysia Clemens  
Doctoral Student  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

## APPENDIX B: FULL STUDY INFORMED CONSENT

### **The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

#### **Consent To Act As A Human Participant**

Project Title: A leader-member exchange approach to understanding school counselors' roles, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions

Project Director: Dr. Amy Milsom

The purpose of this study is to explore factors that may affect school counseling program implementation, school counselor job satisfaction, and school counselor turnover intentions such as principal-school counselor relationships and communication. You will be asked to respond to items via an online survey website. It is anticipated that this process will take approximately 20 minutes.

There is minimal risk associated with this research. Some participants may feel anxiety as a result of completing items about a relationship with and professional behaviors of a colleague. Participants may benefit from this study through the opportunity to reflect on their school counseling programs and working relationships. The benefit to society is that this study may provide information that can be used to narrow the gap between school counselors current practices and implementing programs that they feel best meet the needs of students.

The confidentiality of your participation and responses will be maintained by not requesting identifying data. The data will be stored on the student researcher's computers and an external hard drive. All files will be password protected. The files will be maintained for 3 years following the closure of the project at which point they will be erased.

By indicating your agreement with this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to ask questions at any time. You are also free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Ms. Elysia Clemens by calling 828-712-2583 or Dr. Amy Milsom by calling 336-334-3428. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By indicating your agreement, you are affirming that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in the project described above. Please print a copy of this informed consent form for your records.



## APPENDIX C: LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE SEVEN – MEMBER VERSION

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following items.

|  | 1 = Strongly<br>Disagree | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5 = Strongly<br>Agree |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I know where I stand with my principal...I usually know how satisfied he/she is with what I do.  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My principal understands my job problems and needs.  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My principal recognizes my potential.  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has built into his/her position, my principal would use his/her power to help me solve problems in my work. | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority my principal has, he/she would "bail me out" at his/her expense.                                       | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have enough confidence in my principal that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she was not present to do so.                              | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would characterize my working relationship with my principal as extremely effective.   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## APPENDIX D: SCHOOL COUNSELOR ADVOCACY QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree that you use these skills to advocate for your role as a counselor.

|  | Strongly Disagree     | Disagree              | Agree                 | Strongly Agree        |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I maintain positive working relationships with professionals in the school.                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I effectively communicate my perspective on my role to my principal.                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I "choose my battles" when advocating for my role as a school counselor.                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I listen to my principal's perspective on my role as a school counselor.                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I communicate to my principal possible solutions to role challenges.                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I use problem-solving skills to find solutions to role challenges.                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I present information clearly about my role as a school counselor to my principal.             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I collect data to inform my role as a school counselor.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I share data with my principal to support or to make changes to my role as a school counselor. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I follow up appropriately with my principal about my role as a school counselor.               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I cope effectively with challenges to my role as a school counselor.                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## APPENDIX E: PRINCIPALS' DECISION SHARING ITEM SET

Instructions: Please indicate how frequently your principal:

|  | 1 = Never             | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5 = Always            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Asks you for your ideas and suggestions before making an important decision.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Consults with you before making major changes that will affect you.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Asks you to assume the responsibility for carrying out some activity or task, then lets you handle it in your own way without interfering. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Delegates to you the authority to make important decisions and implement them without his/her prior approval.                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Passes on relevant information obtained in conversations with other people.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Informs you about relevant decisions made by higher management and the reasons for the decisions.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Informs you about relevant aspects of his/her activities and plans.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## APPENDIX F: SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Instructions: Please rate each statement below in terms of the degree to which this item is implemented in your school's counseling program. Next rate how important it is to you to implement this item in your school.

|  | To what degree is this<br>IMPLEMENTED  | How IMPORTANT is this to you   |
|--|--|--|
| A written mission statement exists and is used as a foundation by all counselors.  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them.   | 1 = Not Present<br>2 = Development in Progress<br>3 = Partially Implemented<br>4 = Fully Implemented | <input type="text"/>   |
| The program operates from a plan for closing the achievement gap for minority and lower income students.   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| The program has a set of clear measurable student learning objectives and goals are established for academics, social/personal skills, and career development. | <input type="text"/>   | 1 = Not Important<br>2 = Somewhat Important<br>3 = Important<br>4 = Very Important |
| Needs Assessments are completed regularly and guide program planning.  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| All students receive classroom guidance lessons designed to promote academic, social/personal, and career development.   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| The program ensures that all students have academic plans that include testing, individual advisement, long-term planning, and placement.                      | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| The program has an effective referral and follow-up system for handling student crises.  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselors use student performance data to decide how to meet student needs.  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselors analyze student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to identify interventions to close achievement gaps.                      | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselor job descriptions match actual duties.   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselors spend at least 80% of their time in activities that directly benefit students.   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| The school counseling program includes interventions designed to improve the school's ability to educate all students to high standards.                       | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| An annual review is conducted to get information for improving next year's programs.   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselors use computer software to access student data.  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselors use computer software to analyze student data.   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselors use computer software to use data for school improvement.  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| The school counseling program has the resources to allow counselors to complete appropriate professional development activities.                               | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counseling priorities are represented on curriculum and education committees.   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| School counselors communicate with parents to coordinate student achievement and gain feedback for program improvement.  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |

## APPENDIX G: SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES DISCREPANCY SCALE

Instructions: Below is a list of activities that some school counselors perform. In the first column please indicate the frequency with which you **ACTUALLY** perform these activities. In column two please indicate the frequency with which you would **PREFER** to perform these activities.

|   | ACTUAL   | PREFER   |
|---|--|--|
| Advise students about post-graduation planning                  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Advise students about promotion and retention information       | 1 = I never do this<br>2 = I rarely do this<br>3 = I occasionally do this<br>4 = I frequently do this<br>5 = I routinely do this | <input type="text"/>   |
| Advise students about social skills                             |  | <input type="text"/>   |
| Advise students about test-taking strategies                    |  | <input type="text"/>   |
| Advise students about their yearly course selection             | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Complete duties that are part of faculty responsibilities       | <input type="text"/>   | 1 = I would prefer to never do this<br>2 = I would prefer to rarely do this<br>3 = I would prefer to occasionally do this<br>4 = I would prefer to frequently do this<br>5 = I would prefer to routinely do this |
| Conduct parent workshops and informational sessions             | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Conduct senior exit interviews and surveys                      | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Consult with stakeholders to meet immediate student needs       | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Consult to support the counseling program or school             | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Engage in professional development                              | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Engage in community outreach                                    | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Facilitate referrals  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Provide crisis counseling / response                            | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Provide individual counseling                                   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Provide small group counseling                                  | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Review behavior plans   | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Teach classroom guidance curriculum                             | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Use data to evaluate and to inform the counseling program       | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |
| Use test data to help determine abilities, interests, or skills | <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>   |

## APPENDIX H: JOB SATISFACTION ITEM SET

Instructions: Please mark the most appropriate response to each item.

|   | Very<br>Unsatisfied   | Unsatisfied           | Satisfied             | Very Satisfied        | N/A                   |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| How satisfied are you with your working relationships with teachers at the school where you are a school counselor?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How satisfied are you with your working relationships with administrator(s) at the school where you are a school counselor?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How satisfied are you with your working relationships with students at the school where you are a school counselor?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How satisfied are you with your working relationships with parents at the school where you are a school counselor?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How satisfied are you with your working relationships with school counselors at the school where you are a school counselor?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How satisfied are you with the School Guidance & Counseling Program you (& your colleagues if applicable) are running at the school where you are a school counselor? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

|   | Not At All            | A Little              | Somewhat              | Very                  |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I have a great deal of control over conditions affecting the work I do. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The work allows me to make use of my skills and abilities.              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I gain little satisfaction from my work.                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am appreciated by those with whom I work.                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## APPENDIX I: TURNOVER INTENTIONS ITEM SET

Instructions: Please rate the following:

|  | Extremely<br>Unlikely | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     | Extremely<br>Likely   |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| How likely is it that you will look for work outside your school in the next year? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| How likely is it that you will leave your school within the next year?             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## APPENDIX J: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

**1. Are you a licensed/certified school counselor in the state where you work?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**2. Please indicate your sex.**

- ☐ Female  
☐ Male

**3. What is your age?**

**4. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?**

- ☐ Asian American / Pacific Islander  
☐ American Indian  
☐ African American / Black  
☐ Caucasian / White  
☐ Hispanic / Latino/a  
☐ Multiracial / Multiethnic  
☐ Other (please specify)

**5. At which level do you serve as a school counselor?**

- ☐ Elementary  
☐ Middle/Junior High  
☐ High  
☐ K-12  
☐ Other (please specify)

**6. Which of the following best describes the location of your school?**

- ☐ Rural  
☐ Suburban  
☐ Urban



**7. Approximately what percentage of the students who attend your school receive free or reduced lunch?**

**8. Approximately how many students are in your caseload?**

**9. How many years of experience do you have as a school counselor?**

**10. In what year did you most recently complete a graduate-level course in school counseling?**

**11. In what year did you most recently attend a state or national level school counseling conference?**

**If you have not attended a state or national level conference or can't remember when you last attended, please enter "0".**

**12. Approximately how many articles from the ASCA publications Professional School Counseling (journal) or ASCA School Counselor (magazine) do you typically read in a two month period?**

## APPENDIX K: DECISION SHARING PERMISSION

To: "Elysia Clemens EVCLEMEN" <EVCLEMEN@uncg.edu>  
From: "Gary A Yukl" <GYukl@uamail.albany.edu>  
Date: 07/26/2007 01:46PM  
Subject: RE: Managerial Practices Survey - Dissertation Study

Okay, you can use the items and also show them.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Elysia Clemens EVCLEMEN [mailto:EVCLEMEN@uncg.edu]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 26, 2007 1:44 PM  
**To:** Gary A Yukl  
**Subject:** RE: Managerial Practices Survey - Dissertation Study

Dear Dr. Yukl,

I would like to use the seven items used previously by Paglis and Green (2002).

1. Asks you for your ideas and suggestions before making an important decision.
2. Consults with you before making major changes that will affect you.
3. Asks you to assume the responsibility for carrying out some activity or task, then lets you handle it in your own way without interfering.
4. Delegates to you the authority to make important decisions and implement them without his/her prior approval.
5. Passes on relevant information obtained in conversations with other people.
6. Informs you about relevant decisions made by higher management and the reasons for the decisions.
7. Informs you about relevant aspects of his/her activities and plans.

As you noted the informing behaviors do appear to overlap with some of the other constructs. Paglis and Green found that these items held together as a unidimensional construct. The population of interest in my study will be principals and school counselors and these items seem to be particularly applicable to the school setting.

Thank you,

Elysia Clemens

## APPENDIX L: SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES DISCREPANCY SCALE PERMISSION

Hello Elysia,  
Yes, you have my permission to create a shorter measure based on the SCARS - good luck to you.  
I am attaching the SPSS output files of the Reliability analyses you requested. You should be able to open it using SPSS. If you are not able to open the attachment, let me know and I'll send you a summary.  
-Janna

---

From: Elysia Clemens EVCLEMEN [<mailto:EVCLEMEN@uncg.edu>]  
Sent: Tue 8/14/2007 4:04 PM  
To: Scarborough, Janna Lynn  
Subject: Permission to use SCARS

Dear Dr. Scarborough,

















Thank you for talking with me today about the SCARS! I am emailing to confirm that is okay to use the SCARS as a template (referencing it accordingly) to create a shorter measure for the purpose assessing total intervention discrepancy.

Thank you,  
Elysia Clemens

## APPENDIX M: FOCUS GROUP PROMPTS, SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES DISCREPANCY SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I am in the process of developing an instrument for use in my dissertation study. The purpose of the instrument is to measure the discrepancy between how school counselors are spending their time and how they would prefer to spend their time.
2. Before we get started reviewing the instrument, will you please post the level of school where you work and how many years experience you have as a school counselor? I am asking for this information so that I can accurately describe who I consulted with to develop the instrument when discussing the instrument development process.
3. This slide (post slide 1) illustrates sample items from the instrument.
4. The instructions that go with the items are: “Below is a list of activities that according to the ASCA National Model (2005) school counselors perform. In the first column please indicate the frequency with which you ACTUALLY perform these activities. In column two please indicate the frequency with which you would PREFER to perform these activities.”
5. Do the instructions make sense? What suggestions do you have?
6. The initial set of items for the instrument consists of the 33 activities that are specifically listed in the ASCA National Model as being part of one of the four delivery systems (classroom guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual student planning, and system support).
7. I am asking for your help in reducing the number of activities to about half – so that the instrument is faster for school counselors to complete.
8. The way I would like to structure this discussion is to look at one delivery system at a time and try to find a set of four activities that best represent the delivery system.
9. Lets start with responsive services. (post slide 2). The definition of responsive services is at the top of the slide and numbers 1-6 are the activities that are listed in the ASCA National Model as part of this delivery system.
10. Which four items do you think best describe responsive services?
11. Does this set of items accurately reflect the definition above?
12. If yes, could responsive services be measured with fewer activities? If no, what needs to be added to accurately reflect the above definition?
13. *Note:* The same process of posting a slide and eliciting feedback on item selection will occur for each of the four delivery systems. Because classroom guidance curriculum only has four activities associated with it the first prompt will be skipped.


1 

|   | ACTUAL   | PREFER   |
|---|--|--|
| Conduct parent workshops and informational sessions       |   |   |
| Conduct small group activities outside of the classroom   | <div> <div>1 = I never do this</div> <div>2 = I rarely do this</div> <div>3 = I occasionally do this</div> <div>4 = I frequently do this</div> <div>5 = I routinely do this</div> </div>  |   |
| Serve on interdisciplinary curriculum teams               |   |   |
| Teach classroom guidance curriculum                       |   |   |
| Consult with stakeholders to meet immediate student needs |   |   |
| Facilitate referrals                                      |   | <div> <div>1 = I would prefer to never do this</div> <div>2 = I would prefer to rarely do this</div> <div>3 = I would prefer to occasionally do this</div> <div>4 = I would prefer to frequently do this</div> <div>5 = I would prefer to routinely do this</div> </div>  |
| Provide individual counseling                             |   |   |
| Provide crisis counseling / response                      |   |   |


2  **Responsive Services** consist of activities to meet students' immediate needs and concerns.

1. Consult with stakeholders to meet immediate student needs
2. Facilitate referrals
3. Provide individual counseling
4. Provide crisis counseling / response
5. Provide small group counseling
6. Train peer facilitators (e.g., mediators, tutors, mentors)


14.

- 3  **Individual Student Planning** consists of school counselors coordinating ongoing systematic activities designed to help individual students establish personal goals and develop future plans.

1. Advise students about career decision making
  2. Advise students about college selection
  3. Advise students about financial aid
  4. Advise students about promotion and retention information
  5. Advise students about social skills
  6. Advise students about test-taking strategies
  7. Advise students about their yearly course selection
- 
8. Assess students' abilities, interests, or skills
  9. Conduct senior exit interviews and surveys
  10. Coordinate senior planning appointments
  11. Develop four-year or six-year plans
  12. Facilitate job shadowing
  13. Review behavior plans
  14. Review and interpret test scores
  15. Use test data to help students develop academic plans

- 4  **System Support** consists of management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total school counseling program.

1. Consult to support the counseling program or school
2. Complete duties that are part of faculty responsibilities
3. Engage in professional development
4. Engage in community outreach
5. Manage budget, policies, research, or resource development
6. Serve on community committees or advisory councils
7. Serve on district committees
8. Use data to evaluate and to inform the counseling program

- 5  ***Guidance Curriculum* consists of structured developmental lessons designed to assist students in achieving the competencies.**

1. Classroom instruction
2. Interdisciplinary curriculum
3. Group activities
4. Parent workshops and instruction

14. Closing of focus group: Thank you for your participation in this focus group. The feedback you provided will be used in the development of the instrument.

## APPENDIX N: SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES DISCREPANCY SCALE MODIFICATIONS

**1. Below is a list of activities that according to the ASCA National Model (2005) school counselors perform. In the first column please indicate the frequency with which you ACTUALLY perform these activities. In column two please indicate the frequency with which you would PREFER to perform these activities.**

|   | ACTUAL | PREFER |
|---|--------|--------|
| Conduct parent workshops and informational sessions     | ▼      | ▼      |
| Conduct small group activities outside of the classroom | ▼      | ▼      |
| Serve on interdisciplinary curriculum teams             | ▼      | ▼      |
| Teach classroom guidance curriculum                     | ▼      | ▼      |

**CLASSROOM GUIDANCE CURRICULUM**

Conduct parent workshops and informational sessions

Teach classroom guidance curriculum

**RESPONSIVE SERVICES**

Consult with stakeholders to meet immediate student needs

Facilitate referrals

Provide individual counseling

Provide crisis counseling / response

Provide small group counseling

**INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING**

Advise students about post-graduation planning

Advise students about promotion and retention information

Advise students about social skills

Advise students about test-taking strategies

Advise students about their yearly course selection

Conduct senior exit interviews and surveys

Review behavior plans

Use test data to help determine abilities, interests, or skills

**SYSTEM SUPPORT**

Consult to support the counseling program or school

Complete duties that are part of faculty responsibilities

Engage in professional development

Engage in community outreach

Use data to evaluate and to inform the counseling program

**COMBINED ITEMS**

Advise students about career decision making

Advise students about college selection

Advise students about financial aid

*Advise students about post-graduation planning*

Assess students' abilities, interests, or skills

Review and interpret test scores

Use test data to help students develop academic plans

*Use test data to help determine abilities, interests, or skill*

**Deleted:** Conduct small group activities outside of the classroom

Serve on interdisciplinary curriculum teams

**Deleted:** Train peer facilitators (e.g., mediators, tutors, mentors)

**Deleted:** Coordinate senior planning appointments

Develop four-year or six-year plans

**Deleted:** Facilitate job shadowing

**Deleted:** Manage budget, policies, research, or resource development

Serve on community committees or advisory councils

Serve on district committees



## APPENDIX O: FOCUS GROUP PROMPTS, SCHOOL COUNSELOR ADVOCACY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. If you currently work in a school, please write your position (e.g., teacher, assistant principal, school counselor) at the top of one of the instruments. Also, please write the number of years of school experience you have. The purpose of this information is to describe the participants who consulted on development of these instruments.
2. What questions did you have when reading the instructions? How could the instructions be revised to improve clarity?
3. In reading through the item set, which items led you to pause and wonder what the prompt might be asking?
4. Are there items that appear to be asking more than one question?
5. In what ways could the items be revised to improve clarity?
6. What is your reaction to the rating scale? Do you have enough options to select among or too many options?
7. Please take a moment to read through the list of advocacy skills (Trusty & Brown, 2005, p.261). Next to each item, please write down the advocacy skill that you think are being measured by each item.
8. What skills are missing in the item set, underrepresented, or overrepresented?

## APPENDIX P: MODIFICATIONS TO SCHOOL COUNSELOR ADVOCACY QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements that the school counselor whose initials you entered above uses the following skills to advocate for her/his role as a counselor.

Deleted: your agreement

|  | Strongly Disagree     | <u>Disagree</u>       | <u>Agree</u>          | Strongly Agree        |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Listens to my perspective on her/his role.                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Effectively communicates her/his perspective on her/his role.                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicates possible solutions to challenges to her/his role.               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Maintains a positive working relationship with professionals in the school.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| "Chooses her/his battles" when advocating for her/his role.                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Uses problem-solving skills to find solutions to challenges to her/his role. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presents information about her/his role clearly.                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Collects data to inform her/his role.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Shares data with me to support or to make changes to her/his role.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Follows up appropriately with me.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Copes effectively with challenges to her/his role.                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

1. Listens to my perspective on her/his role as a counselor.
2. Effectively communicates her/his perspective on her/his role as a counselor.
3. Communicates possible challenges to her/his role as a counselor.
4. Maintains a positive working relationship with professionals in the school.
5. "Chooses her/his battles" when advocating for her/his role as a counselor.
6. Uses problem solving skills to find solutions to challenges to her/his role as a counselor.
7. Presents information about her/his role as a counselor clearly.
8. Collects data to inform her/his role as a counselor.
9. Shares data with me to support or to make changes to her/his role as a counselor.
10. Follows up appropriately with me about her/his role as a counselor.
11. Copes effectively with challenges to her/his role as a counselor.

## APPENDIX Q: FOCUS GROUP PROMPTS, ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. If you currently work in a school, please write your position (e.g., teacher, assistant principal, school counselor) at the top of one of the instruments. Also, please write the number of years of school experience you have. The purpose of this information is to describe the participants who consulted on development of these instruments.
2. What questions did you have when reading the instructions? How could the instructions be revised to improve clarity?
3. In reading through the item set, which items led you to pause and wonder what the prompt might be asking?
4. Are there items that appear to be asking more than one question?
5. In what ways could the items be revised to improve clarity?
6. What is your reaction to the rating scale? Do you have enough options to select among or too many options?

## APPENDIX R: MODIFICATIONS TO ROLE PREFERENCES

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Instructions:

The purpose of the items on this page is to assess your understanding of how a **SPECIFIC SCHOOL COUNSELOR** in your building **PREFERS** to spend her/his time.

**Deleted:** Each item below represents a broad area in which some school counselors spend time.

You will be prompted to enter initials to indicate which school counselor's preferences you are reporting.

**Each item below represents a broad area in which some school counselors spend time.** Please indicate your perception of how much time the school counselor, whose initials you enter below, **WOULD PREFER TO SPEND** on each area.

**Deleted:** COMPARED TO HOW MUCH TIME HE/SHE SPENDS

**1. Please enter one of the school counselors' initials who, as indicated in the email invitation, was also invited to participate in this study.**

**2. SCHOOL GUIDANCE CURRICULUM:** conducting classroom guidance and parent workshops that promote academic achievement, career development, or personal/social growth.

- ☐ Substantially Less Time  
☐ Slightly Less Time  
☐ About the Same Amount of Time  
☐ Slightly More Time  
☐ Substantially More Time

**than he/she does now**

**Comment [EVC1]:** Add to end of each response option

**3. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING:** coordinating and implementing efforts to help students set and reach personal goals (e.g., revising academic plans, interpreting test scores, discussing promotion / retention information, reviewing behavior plans, working with students to select courses).

**4. RESPONSIVE SERVICES:** providing services that meet immediate student concerns (e.g., individual or small group counseling, consultation with parents / teachers / community agencies, peer mediation, crisis response).

**5. SYSTEM SUPPORT:** implementing activities that support the school counseling program (e.g., professional development, partnerships with stakeholders, community outreach, data analysis).

**6. OTHER DUTIES:** engaging in activities that may be necessary for the functioning of the school (e.g., test administration, bus / lunch duty, attendance, discipline, substitute teaching, working with the master schedule).

## APPENDIX S: FOCUS GROUP INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTS

### The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

#### Consent To Act As A Human Participant

Project Title: Principal-school counselor relationships: Pilot Study Phase 1

Project Director: Dr. Amy Milsom

The purpose of this study is to develop instruments for use in a research study exploring outcomes of principal-school counselor relationships. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to review two instruments and provide written and verbal feedback on the items and the instrument as a whole. Discussion with other participants will be involved. It is anticipated that participation in this focus group will take 30 minutes.

There is no risk associated with this research. Participants who are not familiar with the services school counselors can provide may benefit from learning more about what school counselors can do in a school. The benefit to society is that additional instrumentation that can be used in educational research will be developed through this research project.

The confidentiality of your participation and responses will be maintained by storing the informed consent forms with your names in a different place from the completed feedback that you provide and the notes that the student researcher takes during the discussion. The data will be kept in locked file cabinets and on the student researcher's password protected computers for 3 years following the closure of the project at which point the paper copies will be shredded and computer files erased.

By signing this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to ask questions at any time. You are also free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Dr. Amy Milsom by calling 336-334-3428. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By signing this consent form, you are affirming that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in the project described above. You are receiving two copies of this informed consent form, please return one copy to the researcher and keep the second copy for your records.

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**Participant's Signature**

**Date**

### **Consent To Act As A Human Participant**

Project Title: Principal-school counselor relationships: Pilot Study Phase 2

Project Director: Dr. Amy Milsom

The purpose of this study is to develop instruments for use in a research study exploring outcomes of principal-school counselor relationships. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to review one instrument provide electronic feedback on the items and the instrument as a whole. Discussion with other participants will be involved. The discussion will be recorded. It is anticipated that participation will take 30 minutes.

There is no risk associated with this research. Participants who are not familiar with ASCA National Model may benefit from learning more about what activities are associated with ASCA National Model implementation. The benefit to society is that additional instrumentation that can be used in educational research will be developed through this research project.

The confidentiality of your participation and responses will be maintained by deleting your names from the recorded transcription so that only your comments will be retained. The data will be kept in locked file cabinets and on the student researcher's password protected computers for 3 years following the closure of the project at which point the paper copies will be shredded and computer files erased.

By confirming that you received this form and staying in the MOO classroom for the focus group, you are indicating that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to ask questions at any time. You are also free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Dr. Amy Milsom by calling 336-334-3428. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By confirming that you received this form and staying in the MOO classroom for the focus group, you are affirming that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in the project described above. Please print a copy of this informed consent form for your records.

## APPENDIX T: PRINCIPAL EMAIL INVITATION

Dear [Principal's name]:

You and [school counselor 1] and [school counselor 2] are invited to participate in a research study that will evaluate outcomes of principal-school counselor relationships including: principal-school counselor communication, school counseling program implementation, school counselor job satisfaction, and school counselor turnover intentions. Participation will take approximately 20 minutes. To learn more about this study and to participate please click on the following website link: [insert link].

If you choose to participate in this study you may (a) request a copy of the results and (b) be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elysia Clemens  
Doctoral Student  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

## APPENDIX U: SCHOOL COUNSELOR EMAIL INVITATION

Dear [School Counselor's name]:

You and [principal's name] are invited to participate in a research study that will evaluate outcomes of principal-school counselor relationships including: principal-school counselor communication, school counseling program implementation, school counselor job satisfaction, and school counselor turnover intentions. Participation will take approximately 30 minutes. To learn more about this study and to participate please click on the following website link: [insert link].

If you choose to participate in this study you may (a) request a copy of the results and (b) be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elysia Clemens  
Doctoral Student  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro



## APPENDIX V: PILOT STUDY, PHASE TWO INFORMED CONSENT

### **The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

#### **Consent To Act As A Human Participant**

Project Title: Principal-school counselor relationships: Pilot Study Phase 3

Project Director: Dr. Amy Milsom

The purpose of this study is to explore outcomes of principal-school counselor relationships such as aspects of communication, school counseling program implementation, school counselor job satisfaction, and school counselor turnover intentions. You will be asked to respond to items via an online survey website. It is anticipated that this process will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

There is minimal risk associated with this research. Some participants may feel anxiety as a result of completing items about a relationship with and professional behaviors of a colleague or knowing that a colleague is asked to complete similar items about them. Participants may benefit from this study through the opportunity to reflect on their relationship and communication with a colleague. The benefit to society is that this pilot study will strengthen the design of a subsequent research study exploring outcomes of principal-school counselor relationships.

The confidentiality of your participation and responses will be maintained by using requesting non-identifying data to match the responses of dyads of principals and school counselors who work together. The data will be stored on the student researcher's computers and an external hard drive. All files will be password protected. The files will be maintained for 3 years following the closure of the project at which point they will be erased.

By indicating your agreement with this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to ask questions at any time. You are also free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Dr. Amy Milsom by calling 336-334-3428. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By indicating your agreement, you are affirming that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in the project described above. Please print a copy of this informed consent form for your records.

## APPENDIX W: LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE SEVEN – LEADER VERSION

Instructions: The following items reference the school counselor whose initials you entered above.

|   | 1 = Strongly<br>Disagree | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5 = Strongly<br>Agree |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I know where I stand with this school counselor...I usually know how satisfied he/she is with what I do.  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| This school counselor understands my job problems and needs.  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| This school counselor recognizes my potential.  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has built into his/her position, this school counselor would use his/her power to help me solve problems in my work. | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority this school counselor has, he/she would "bail me out" at his/her expense.                                       | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have enough confidence in this school counselor that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she was not present to do so.                              | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would characterize my working relationship with this school counselor as extremely effective.   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## APPENDIX X: LMX7 LEADER PERMISSION

Yes, this will be fine. Thank you for checking. Best of luck with your research.

*Laura L. Paglis, PhD  
Associate Professor of Management  
University of Evansville  
1800 Lincoln Ave  
Evansville, IN 47722  
(812) 488-1156*

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**From:** Elysia Clemens EVCLEMEN [mailto:EVCLEMEN@uncg.edu]

**Sent:** Sunday, August 12, 2007 8:27 PM

**To:** Paglis, Laura

**Subject:** new leader-perspective LMX7 measure

Dear Dr. Paglis,

I am emailing to request permission to use the new LMX7(I) measure published in Paglis & Green (2002) in my dissertation study and to include a copy of the instrument in my dissertation appendix. The study will evaluate outcomes of the principal-school counselor relationship. If it is okay to use this measure, may I substitute "school counselor" for "employee" throughout the measure? The purpose of this modification is to use language that is more typical in a school setting.

Thank you,

Elysia Clemens

## APPENDIX Y: ROLE PREFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE – SCHOOL COUNSELOR VERSION

Instructions: The next five items represent broad areas in which some school counselors spend time. Each area is followed by a brief definition and a few examples of some types of activities that school counselors might engage in specific to that area. Please indicate how much time you would PREFER TO SPEND in each area COMPARED TO HOW MUCH TIME YOU SPEND NOW.

**1. SCHOOL GUIDANCE CURRICULUM: conducting classroom guidance and parent workshops that are focused on academic achievement, career development, or personal/social growth.**

- ☐ Substantially Less Time
- ☐ Slightly Less Time
- ☐ About the Same Amount of Time
- ☐ Slightly More Time
- ☐ Substantially More Time

**2. RESPONSIVE SERVICES: providing services that meet immediate student concerns (e.g., individual or small group counseling, consultation with parents / teachers / community agencies, peer mediation, crisis response).**

**3. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING: coordinating and implementing efforts to help students set and reach personal goals (e.g., revising academic plans, interpreting test scores, discussing promotion / retention information, reviewing behavior plans, working with students to select courses).**

**4. SYSTEM SUPPORT: Implementing activities that support the school counseling program (e.g., professional development, partnerships with stakeholders, community outreach, data analysis).**

**5. OTHER DUTIES: engaging in activities that may be necessary for the functioning of the school (e.g., test administration, buss / lunch duty, attendance, discipline, substitute teaching, working with the master schedule).**

Note: The response format is identical for all items.

## APPENDIX Z: ROLE PREFERENCES QUESTIONNAIRE – PRINCIPAL VERSION

Instructions: The purpose of the items on this page is to assess your understanding of how a SPECIFIC SCHOOL COUNSELOR in your building PREFERS to spend her/his time. Each item below represents a broad area in which some school counselors spend time. You will be prompted to enter initials to indicate which school counselor's preferences you are reporting. Please indicate your perception of how much time the school counselor, whose initials you enter below, WOULD PREFER TO SPEND on each area COMPARED TO HOW MUCH TIME HE/SHE SPENDS

**1. Please enter one of the school counselors' initials who, as indicated in the email invitation, was also invited to participate in this study.**

**2. SCHOOL GUIDANCE CURRICULUM: conducting classroom guidance and parent workshops that promote academic achievement, career development, or personal/social growth.**

- ☐ Substantially Less Time  
☐ Slightly Less Time  
☐ About the Same Amount of Time  
☐ Slightly More Time  
☐ Substantially More Time

**3. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING: coordinating and implementing efforts to help students set and reach personal goals (e.g., revising academic plans, interpreting test scores, discussing promotion / retention information, reviewing behavior plans, working with students to select courses).**

**4. RESPONSIVE SERVICES: providing services that meet immediate student concerns (e.g., individual or small group counseling, consultation with parents / teachers / community agencies, peer mediation, crisis response).**

**5. SYSTEM SUPPORT: implementing activities that support the school counseling program (e.g., professional development, partnerships with stakeholders, community outreach, data analysis).**

**6. OTHER DUTIES: engaging in activities that may be necessary for the functioning of the school (e.g., test administration, buss / lunch duty, attendance, discipline, substitute teaching, working with the master schedule).**

Note: The response format is identical for items two through six.

## APPENDIX AA: PRINCIPAL DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: The purpose of the information requested on this page is to match your responses with your school counselors' response while maintaining the confidentiality of all participant responses.

**1. Please enter the first three digits of your school's MAIN OFFICE telephone number (not including the area code).**

**For example, if the school's main office telephone number is (828)254-6345, then you would enter "254."**

**2. Please enter the street or physical ADDRESS NUMBER of your school.**

**For example, if the school's address is 360 School Road, then you would enter "360."**

Page will break here, and a new page titled "Demographic Questionnaire" will open.

**3. Please indicate your sex.**

☐ Female

☐ Male

**4. What is your age?**

**5. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?**

☐ Asian American / Pacific Islander

☐ American Indian

☐ African American / Black

☐ Caucasian / White

☐ Hispanic / Latino/a

☐ Multiracial

☐ Other (please specify)

**6. At which level do you serve as a principal?**

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Middle/Junior High
- ☐ High
- ☐ K-12
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**7. How many years of experience do you have as a school administrator?**

## APPENDIX AB: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Instructions: The purpose of these final items is to better understand how school counselors and principals can communicate effectively about the school counseling program and role.

1. What has contributed to your understanding school counselors' preferences for how they spend their time?
2. What does effective school counselor-principal communication about the school counselor's role look like?
3. What would it take for you to support significant changes to the school counseling program or to how school counselors in your building spend their time?



## APPENDIX AC: SCHOOL COUNSELOR ADVOCACY QUESTIONNAIRE – PRINCIPAL VERSION

Instructions: Please indicate your agreement that the school counselor whose initials you entered above uses the following skills.

|  | Strongly Disagree     |                       |                       | Strongly Agree        |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Listens to my perspective on her/his role.                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Effectively communicates her/his perspective on her/his role.                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicates possible solutions to challenges to her/his role.               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Maintains a positive working relationship with professionals in the school.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| "Chooses her/his battles" when advocating for her/his role.                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Uses problem-solving skills to find solutions to challenges to her/his role. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presents information about her/his role clearly.                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Collects data to inform her/his role.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Shares data with me to support or to make changes to her/his role.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Follows up appropriately with me.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Copes effectively with challenges to her/his role.                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |